



SOCIAL CARE IN CRISIS

CARE WORKERS SPEAK OUT ON A SYSTEM BROKEN BY CUTS AND THE SEARCH FOR PROFITS >>Pages 10&11

JOHNSON'S CLASS WAR ON WORKERS

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RACIST 'PUSHBACK' MEANS MORE MIGRANT DEATHS

SINK TORY PLANS



Border Force to use armed jet skis to put refugees in more danger >>Pages 3 and 5

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

Why the US right are attacking abortion rights

ABORTION RIGHTS in the US are under ferocious assault.

Sections of the right hate abortion.

They see the traditional family as an institution that maintains stability and provides control.

Some politicians want to use this to build support—and tear away women's rights.

>>Pages 14&15

CLIMATE



Build protests and strikes for Cop26 talks

THE UNITED Nations Climate Change Conference, better known as Cop26, is fast approaching.

Like previous talks, Cop26 will likely fall flat.

Efforts are underway to build mobilisations to bring the rage over governments' climate inaction to the conference.

>>Page 17

POLICE

Two more years for the Met's top rotten cop

DAME CRESSIDA Dick's contract to lead the Metropolitan Police is to be extended for another two years.

Those who have suffered as a result of the Met in recent years questioned her suitability to remain in the job.

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THE THINGS THEY SAY

'We met over Zoom and he seemed incredibly engaged, compassionate and charming but then he had to shoot off'

Education secretary Gavin Williamson who said he had been talking with black footballer Marcus Rashford when it was black rugby player Maro Itoje

'A global megastar is born. Emma Raducanu winning the US Open is truly incredible'

Nigel Farage on tennis player Emma Raducanu whose father is Romanian. Farage previously said people wouldn't want to live next door to a Romanian family

'Couldn't handle the pressure and quit when she was losing badly'

Piers Morgan on Emma Raducanu having to withdraw from Wimbledon

'Never seen a more brilliant illustration of mental strength & resilience'

Piers Morgan on Emma Raducanu winning



US still lying about Afghan air strike that killed ten

THE US military lied about the murderous drone strike that killed ten people in the last days of its retreat from Afghanistan.

A New York Times investigation disproves the US version of events.

It asks whether explosives were present in the vehicle, whether the driver had a connection to Isis and whether there was a second explosion after the missile struck the car.

Military officials said they did not know the identity of the car's driver when the drone fired.

They said he possibly visited an Isis safe house and, at one point, loaded what they thought could be explosives into the car.

The newspaper has identified the driver as Zemari Ahmadi, a longtime worker for a US aid group.

The evidence suggests that his travels that day actually involved transporting colleagues to and from work.

And an analysis of video feeds showed that what the military may



ZEMARI AHMADI'S family members mourning his death in Kabul.

Times reporting shows that it killed ten, including seven children, in a dense residential block. Since the strike, US military officials justified their actions by citing an even larger blast that took place afterwards.

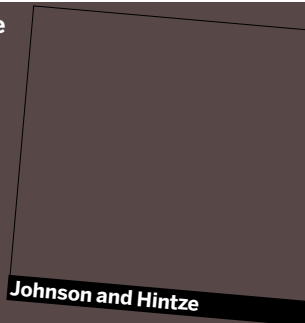
"Because there were secondary explosions, there is a reasonable conclusion to be made that there was explosives in that vehicle," the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, general Mark Milley, said recently.

But an examination of the scene of the strike, conducted by the Times visual investigations team and a Times reporter the morning afterwards, and followed up with a second visit four days later, found no evidence of a second, more powerful explosion.

Those killed were Ahmadi and three of his children, Zamir, 20, Faisal, 16, and Farzad, 10, Ahmadi's cousin Naser, 30, three of Ahmadi's brother Romal's children, Arwin, 7, Benyamin, 6, and Hayat, 2 and two 3 year old girls, Malika and Somaya.

WITHIN SECONDS of the result of the vote on the Tory social care tax rises at 7.28pm on last Wednesday, Boris Johnson legged it to the door. He went to Hertford House where it costs £12,000 to hire a room. He was met by the Conservative Party Treasurer's Group.

Around 70 fat cat donors were there to mingle with Johnson and Chancellor Rishi Sunak. On the guest list were billionaire Michael Hintze, investment banker Malik Karim, and Lord Rami Ranger who became a peer after donating £1 million to the party.



Johnson and Hintze

MORE THAN 1,000 senior civil servants have received six-figure "golden goodbyes" worth over £100 million since MPs passed a law five years ago to outlaw them. The Enterprise Act expressly put a £95,000 cap on exit payments in the public sector. But it was not implemented until November 2020. It was in place for just three months before a court challenge overturned it.

It is the fashion for donors to get contracts

A FIRM owned by a major Tory donor made £13 million in profits in 2020—up more than 9,000 percent—after securing a string of PPE contracts during the pandemic.

Meller Designs, a fashion accessories wholesaler which sold less than £13 million of goods in 2019, was awarded £160 million in government contracts to supply PPE last year.

These contracts were awarded without the usual competitive tendering process due to the shortage of masks.

It won the first £65 million order in May, weeks after the owner of



David Meller

its parent company, David Meller, directly lobbied Health Minister Lord Bethell via the "VIP lane" for Covid contracts.

Meller has given nearly £60,000 to the Tories since 2009. He was a director of Meller Designs until 2013 and co-owned it with his brother until January via a Jersey-based offshore company.

Damning criticism of reservoir safety

A TERRIFYING 65 reservoirs in England are overdue for safety measures to be completed. This is an increase since an incident at Toddbrook reservoir which sparked the evacuation of Whaley Bridge in 2019.

The Environment Agency released its data on reservoir safety last month.

It showed that between January 2019 and December 2020, inspecting engineers logged 167 "measures to be taken in the interest of safety" (MIOS).

In the previous

report, the number of outstanding MIOS that had not been completed on time was 49.

By the end of 2019 it was 55, and by December 2020 it was 65.

Only 23 of those had faced enforcement action for their tardiness.

There are more than 2,000 large raised reservoirs in England, holding water above ground level, with many designated as high-risk.

This is because an "uncontrolled release" such as a dam failure could kill people.

Rodents turn on rich rats

THE RICH in northern Argentina who took over the area of Nordelta are facing an animal revenge.

Argentina's most well-known gated community is an enclave of homes amid a landscape of lakes north of Buenos Aires.

Little did they know that nature would turn on them in the form of thousands of capybaras—large rodents who have destroyed manicured lawns, bitten dogs and caused traffic accidents.

The animals, known locally as "carpinchos" are enraging the wealthy.

"They not only destroy gardens but their excrement has also become a problem," one local man told the daily La Nación newspaper.

He complained that local wildlife officials had prohibited residents from touching the large rodents.

Ecologist

But many other Argentians have taken to social media to defend the rodents.

And prominent ecologist Enrique Viale said it was a mistake to frame the rodent influx as an invasion.

"It's the other way round—Nordelta invaded the ecosystem of the carpinchos," said Viale.

He has been campaigning with many others for ten years now for congress to pass a law to defend the wetlands from development.

"Wealthy real estate developers with government backing have to destroy nature in order to sell clients the dream of living in the wild.

The people who buy those homes want nature, but without the mosquitoes, snakes or carpinchos," he said.



The wealth of British billionaires rose 22 percent during the pandemic.

Food bank use rose by 33 percent during the pandemic.

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Write to
Socialist Worker
PO Box 74955
London
E16 9EJ

Vile Tories threaten to turn back migrant boats at sea

by ISABEL RINGROSE

BRITISH BORDER guards could gain the power to stop, board and instantly send back refugee boats in the English Channel.

Tory MPs are demanding that any migrant, including children, should immediately be forced back across the border if they travelled via “illegal” means.

Tory MP Lee Anderson demanded British authorities “drop these illegal immigrants off on a French beach and send the French government a bill for the cost of the journey”.

Home secretary Priti Patel supports the calls for a crackdown.

She told MPs last Monday that she was ready to withhold £54 million she had promised to France to stop refugees from crossing.

In the meeting, Tory MP Craig Mackinlay said the Home Office should remove “diplomatic niceties”. He added it should show “that the route does not work” so “migrants would simply not waste their money in trying”.

Last Wednesday a Home Office statement said Border Force staff are being trained to employ “turn-around” tactics at sea.

Labour’s shadow home secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds attacked Patel for refusing to work with France.

He called for cooperation on “tackling vile people-smuggling gangs and properly managing safe routes to prevent people risking their lives.”

The Tories also claim they are tackling people smuggling by making it harder for refugees to cross. But this only makes refugees more reliant on such gangs.

People smugglers are small-time criminals whose business model relies on Britain and the European Union’s racist border rules.

If there were safe routes, there’d

A NEW Tory plan could order Border Force patrols to put refugees’ lives in danger

be no need for refugees to rely on traffickers.

Up to 850 refugees crossed the English Channel to Britain on Monday—higher than the last record of 828 reaching Britain in a single day at the end of last month.

Tim Naor Hilton, the chief executive of Refugee Action, said, “Refugees feel there is little choice other than to cross the Channel in flimsy boats.”

He explained that it’s “because the government refuses to open up alternative routes to safety”.

Hilton added, “The shocking

images we’ve seen in Afghanistan have shown what forces people to leave their country.

“That same terror is happening in other countries such as Eritrea, Iran, Sudan and elsewhere.”

Whether the Tories like it or not, Britain remains part of the UN’s 1951 refugee convention.

It means the Tory MPs’ demands might not be possible under present laws.

But with Patel’s Nationality and Borders Bill making its way through parliament, legal changes may not be too far off. The racist legislation

would allow the Tories to set up offshore processing centres, turn away migrant boats and imprison those who do make it to Britain.

For the first time, how asylum seekers enter Britain will determine whether their application is successful.

The only solution is to open the border and let refugees come to safety.



What’s your story?

Email with your ideas
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Dangerous—Patel

Bigots’ plan puts refugee lives in peril

FRANCE HAS warned the Tories not to do anything that breaches international law to avoid a “serious loss” of confidence and cooperation.

That’s because the French government—which routinely carries out brutal crackdowns on refugee settlements in northern France—doesn’t want refugees to be sent back.

France’s interior minister Gerald Darmanin accused Priti Patel of plotting “financial blackmail” and violating international law.

He also said that Patel’s plans to send boats of migrants back across the Channel will not be accepted.

Intercepting boats to be sent back could indeed lead to dangerous consequences, such as people jumping into the sea. But France’s policing of areas such as Calais means many have little alternative but to attempt the journey.

Plotting

And cracking down on boat crossings won’t stop people attempting to reach safety in Britain after travelling so far, despite what the Home Office claims.

While the Tories are busy plotting to throw asylum seekers back into the Channel, Afghan refugees in Britain are being abandoned.

The government has patted itself on the back for its rescue attempts. Yet those fleeing Afghanistan have arrived in a “chaotic and uncoordinated” response.

More than 10,000 Afghans were in quarantine last week.

One hotel with 50 babies in quarantine had no access to formula milk.

And supplies of clothes and toiletries to others were turned away by managers who had no staff to distribute them.

Women have been too embarrassed to ask male translators for sanitary products, and pregnant women were left without sufficient food.

Many sit in limbo, without knowledge of their immigration status. The Tories’ empty promises to Afghans underline the cruelty of their brutal migration policies.

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Racist attack on a mosque

DIDSBURY MOSQUE in Greater Manchester was set alight in the early hours of Saturday morning last week in a suspected Islamophobic attack.

No one was injured, but the mosque’s door was damaged.

On Saturday afternoon Manchester Stand Up to Racism (SUTR) called a vigil to show solidarity.

Tracy Pook, an admin officer at the mosque, said she was “overwhelmed by how many people have turned up in support”.

“We’re not going to let hate divide us,” she said. The same mosque has previously been attacked by far right activists.

Nahella Ashraf from

Manchester SUTR told the vigil. “One message to take away is that there are more of us, black and white, young and old, Muslim, and non Muslim, people of faith and no faith standing together to defend each other.”

“We live in a period when the hostile environment has been encouraged by politicians and the mainstream press.”

She added, “It’s important that we campaign against individual attacks and also recognise where racism comes from.”

At the mosque vigil



Build on the anger after Tory plans for care fall apart

by YURI PRASAD

BACK STORY

A FEW days after parliament overwhelmingly passed the first round of the government's social care bill, Tory MPs are already having jitters.

Boris Johnson's plan raises National Insurance contributions that disproportionately target poorer workers.

But the chief beneficiaries are wealthy people with large savings pots and expensive property.

The impact of the bill is already hitting the Tories in the polls.

For the first time since the height of the pandemic in January, Labour has a lead in at least one survey, while it has drawn level on some others.

It's not difficult to see why.

The combination of higher National Insurance contributions, Universal Credit cuts and a freeze on the income tax personal allowance will rob over £1,000 a year from workers.

A government report by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) last week said the rise would significantly impact the low paid.

"There may be an impact on family formation, stability or break-down as individuals, who are currently just about managing financially, will see their disposable income reduce," it said.

And the more Johnson's plans were scrutinised, the more the social care elements were exposed as a sham.

Struggle

Millions of people already struggle without the care they desperately need because their local council has not yet assessed them or found that they were not frail enough.

Johnson's plan was supposed to help them.

But nearly 70,000 people in England are likely to die waiting for access to care before it comes into force.

A further 72,883 adults are also likely to have died while waiting for

social care in the 26 months since July 2019. And what of the focus of the Tories' offer, that social care costs will be capped at £86,000?

One former pensions minister this week told the Observer newspaper that by the time some people reach the £86,000 cap, they would have already spent £150,000 or more in total care costs.

And it has now also been revealed that a significant number of people who need care will die before they reach the government's cap.

Excluded

With living costs excluded, a typical care home resident would take a little over three and half years to hit the upper limit on fees.

But according to the British Geriatrics Society, the average life expectancy for those in care homes without nursing is just two years.

For care homes with nursing it is just 12 months.

The plan is a con that will not deliver real change but will see workers pay more in tax.

The anger building up at Tory plans is leading to threats of a backbench rebellion.

But no one should put their faith in the MPs that oppose the bill.

Some might rebel because they hate all tax rises, while others in former "Red Wall" seats fear the wrath of their constituents.

Neither is prepared to take the measures required to really "fix" social care.

Last week, the Tories revealed new plans to deal with the social care crisis.

● This would include a new tax on workers based on national insurance contributions.

● But those who have wealth salted away in shares, investment accounts or who make money as landlords will not pay a penny more.

FACES OF misery—not every Tory MP is happy with Boris Johnson

Tax the rich to pay for social care system

LABOUR SHOULD be hammering Boris Johnson on the social care issue, but instead it is relying on the Tories destroying themselves.

The whole social care system needs to be wrestled away from private providers—and billions of pounds need to be invested into building a new model of care.

But Keir Starmer's party shudders at the thought of announcing tax rises on the rich and challenging the power of big business.

It reluctantly called last week for the "those with the broadest shoulders" to carry the burden of increased spending.

Yet when it comes to specific plans for this, Labour could announce none—and that allowed Johnson to suggest his "plan" was better than Labour's "no plan".

This week, the best shadow health secretary Jonathan Ashworth could offer during a Sunday politics TV programme was a "new national framework".

Under this unremarkable "care in the community" plan, people who need care will get more access to packages that allow them to stay home rather than in at a care home.

"If you do that, you actually save money," muttered Ashworth.



Jonathan Ashworth

He went on to talk about Labour's commitment to improving pay in the sector, saying, "So what we'll do is pay the staff a real living wage.

"Lots of the staff get less than the minimum wage at the moment. So we'll get rid of these zero hours contracts that a quarter of the staff are on, and we'll invest in their training" he added.

Of course, everyone wants more access to care in people's homes—and better paid staff.

But these policies on their own are a sticking plaster on the gaping wound that is social care today.

The whole system is on the verge of collapse, with hundreds of thousands of new workers needed immediately.

Government cuts mean many firms that provide help to people in their homes are on the brink of collapse.

People in many parts of Britain are without desperately needed carers, with none expected in the future either.

Labour should turn the social care issue into a chance to attack the role of the market in health and care. It should offer a well-funded alternative paid for by a serious wealth tax on the rich and the corporations.

Government to throw away Covid protections

BORIS JOHNSON was expected this week to throw away virtually any protection against Covid-19.

A senior government source told The Telegraph newspaper that Johnson's argument is, "This is the new normal. We need to learn to live with Covid."

His speech came as around 1,000 people die a week with Covid-19 across Britain, and about 7,000 were admitted to hospital.

Scotland, where schools went back earlier than England, had by far the highest case rates last week.

England is highly likely to follow as schools fully return and universities reopen.

Professor Christian Pagel, a member of the Independent Sage experts' group says, "In terms of admissions, levels in England are far lower than the January peak.

"But this week we reached 900 a day for the first time since February.

"And we've had high levels for

a long time—adding over 5,000 admissions a week for several weeks now.

"Deaths are going up—slowly, but they are going up. Since 1 July more than 5,000 people have died.

"Right now, about 1,000 people are dying with Covid every week. I don't think we should be OK with this."

There have been over 2.7 million confirmed cases since the Delta variant took over in mid-May. And there is no sign of the figures coming down.

Johnson wants to sweep away any restrictions of the ability of big business to make profits.

And he wants schools to operate as if Covid-19 has disappeared so that parents can be guaranteed to go to work.

This requires persuading people that it is perfectly fine to "live with the virus" and at least 50,000 deaths a year.

Trade unions should oppose this murderous policy.

Doctors slam Covid failures

THE RISE in Covid-19 Cases will push the NHS into further crisis.

The BMA doctors' association has condemned the government's handling of coronavirus and demanded no going back to a pre-pandemic NHS that was understaffed and underfunded.

In a speech on Monday, Dr Chaand

Nagpaul, the BMA's chair of council, said NHS staff have never faced such a crisis before.

He urged ministers to take action to ensure the health service is better prepared to respond to pandemics in the future.

"We will not accept a return to the old pre-pandemic NHS,

which was so patently understaffed and under-resourced, where nine in ten doctors are afraid of medical errors daily," he said.

"We will not accept an NHS running at unsafe bed occupancy and without spare capacity."

These bold words need to be turned into action.

Even deeper crisis in NHS

THE RISE in Covid-19 Cases will push the NHS into further crisis.

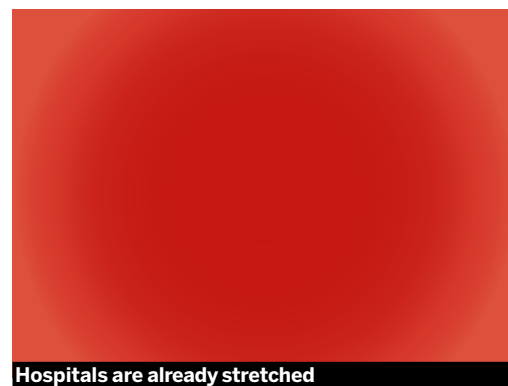
Already there are reports of many hospitals and ambulance services unable to cope.

Royal Stoke hospital has stopped non-emergency operations.

Betsi Cadwaladr health board, which covers north Wales, has taken similar action.

In Cornwall, hospitals suspended planned surgical operations due to continued pressures on healthcare services.

A paramedic working in Cornwall is so concerned by the current crisis facing the ambulance service that he believes "someone is going to die, if they haven't



Hospitals are already stretched

already". CornwallLive website reported 26 ambulances parked outside a hospital at Treliske, Truro, last Monday night.

There is also a crisis in the Scottish ambulance service with the Daily Record reporting that the average waiting time for an ambulance had

soared to six hours.

Patient Sheila Anderson, 67, waited 20 hours for an ambulance to arrive after having a serious reaction to a drug given during hip surgery. Her ordeal culminated in a three-hour wait outside Glasgow's Queen Elizabeth University Hospital.

Socialist Worker
WHAT WE THINK

SMASH THE VILE TORIES' REIGN AND THEIR GRUBBY SYSTEM

THE TORIES' class war has escalated further, and it isn't set to slow down. This week Tory Work and Pension Secretary Therese Coffey unveiled her solution to the scrapping of the Universal Credit £20 uplift.

Coffey says claimants should simply "work extra hours".

Clearly she doesn't understand how Universal Credit works—as the more hours a claimant works the fewer benefits they receive.

It also shows her snobbery towards people on benefits.

And slurs made by Tory cabinet member Michael Gove have been revealed, including a description of people living in colonised countries as "fuzzy-wuzzies".

These aren't just rogue comments made by a few backwards Tories—it is inherent to their beliefs. The latest scandals are another sign of how out of touch the Tories are with ordinary people.

And their class war isn't just meted out in words and speeches, but in actions that affect ordinary people's everyday lives.

They are on the warpath against Universal Credit claimants by snatching away the meagre £20 uplift.

Universal Credit claimants doubled during the pandemic, and more than 6.2 million families will now be impacted by the payment cut. Half a million—including 200,000 children—will be pushed into poverty. Those disproportionately affected will be single parents, black and ethnic minority families, and disabled people.

National insurance hikes will also ensure those with the least pay the most. In fact, the more you earn, the lower your tax contribution to the Tories

disastrous new plans for social care. And expected minimum wage increases will still not be enough for people to survive on.

With the furlough scheme also set to end, thousands more will suffer unemployment.

It's clear why these attacks from the wealthiest and most privileged in society are hitting those at the bottom. The Tories are out for themselves, and their class.

And, they're managing to get away with it. Their racist scapegoating of migrants and refugees provides cover to pass the blame for the inequality in society to the most vulnerable.

But it's not because of a few thousand refugees that the welfare system is on its knees, so the attempts to divide people must be resisted. While the Tories force us to fight over crumbs, they gorge on luxury and wealth.

Boris Johnson, his horde of deplorables, their wealthy friends and the bosses and corporations they represent are the enemies of ordinary working people.

Everything they have must be ripped from them. It's time for the Tories to get a taste of their own medicine.

“
The latest
scandals are a
sign of how out
of touch the
Tories are

STARMER AND UNION TOPS

>>>from page 20

them in the party. Others, such as Unite's new leader Sharon Graham, are talking openly about breaking unions' reliance on the Labour Party—and maybe even returning to strikes.

Starmer's speech was a direct response. He promised the union bureaucrats that Labour would ban zero hour contracts and "fire and rehire" attacks.

Union leaders care about these a lot—not just because they affect many thousands of their members,

but because they undermine their ability to negotiate with bosses.

So Starmer talked of how Labour arranged parliamentary against fire and rehire. But it came with a warning. "Until we have a Labour government, our ability to deliver the transformational change that we all know is necessary will be frustrated," he said.

"We have lost the last four elections, and if we don't change then we won't be in a position to deliver the new deal that workers

in Britain, your members, deserve."

The real message to union leaders was this—stick with me and don't rock the boat, and in 2024 I'll give you just enough of what you want.

That might be enough to satisfy some union leaders. But for ordinary people, it's all far too little and far too late.

Starmer's speech showed that we can't sit around and wait for Labour anymore. We need to turn talk about action into reality with strikes and workplace struggle.



ANALYSIS

ALEX CALLINICOS



Johnson's strength is also his weakness

IT'S EASY to despise Boris Johnson. He's an Etonian sleazebag with a history of racist remarks who is willing to say or do anything to win and retain power. It's not true that he has no principles, but they are a version of Thatcherism.

Johnson is what the French call a sovereignist, who puts defending British national sovereignty before anything else. He's also a free-marketeer. Witness his willingness a year ago to "let the bodies pile up" rather than damage the economy by imposing another lockdown.

For all this, it would be a mistake to underestimate Johnson. Currently he dominates British politics to an extent that no one has since Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair.

The fundamental reason for this is Johnson's willingness to challenge establishment neoliberalism.

It was establishment neoliberalism that went down to defeat in the June 2016 Brexit referendum. Theresa May tried to keep Britain close to the European Union. Johnson brought her down, negotiated a much harder Brexit, and handsomely won the December 2019 general election.

"Get Brexit done" was a brilliant slogan. It was calculated to exploit public weariness with endless manoeuvring in parliament and present Johnson as the people's champion against obstructive judges and MPs.

It appealed to the anger of Leave voters, some of them ex-Labour supporters, at Remainers' attempts to nullify the referendum result.

Johnson's victory might have been scuppered by his government's callous bungling of the pandemic. What saved him was the successful vaccine rollout. In August he doubled down on this bet on the vaccines by scrapping social distancing.

The National Insurance surcharge represents a further attack by Johnson on establishment neoliberalism, this time in the Thatcherite hard core. The move will raise taxation to 35.5 percent of national income, the highest level since 1950.

Torsten Bell of the Resolution Foundation think-tank commented, "We've learnt that low-tax Conservatism is dead. This is the biggest set of tax rises since the 1970s if you take this together with the tax rises in the March budget."

Agony

This has caused agony among Tory MPs and in the cabinet, where the Thatcherite commitment to low taxes is deep. The Telegraph newspaper was a joy to read last week.

One "normally loyal senior Tory MP" said, "This is the first skirmish in a long war. We have a Conservative government that is addicted to spending money."

Another MP confessed that, "on occasion in recent months, he had gone home to his partner and cried because of the decisions he had had to vote on, adding that he did not know what a Tory was any more."

Yet Johnson got the tax hike through with barely a squeak of opposition from the Tory ranks. This was mainly because he presented it as saving the NHS—exactly the line he used to justify the lockdowns.

This wrong-footed not just the Tory low taxers, but also Labour, which has always prided itself as the party of the NHS.

All this shows that Johnson is an extremely effective political operator. Whether he can sustain his dominance is another matter. First, Covid-19 may have some more nasty surprises up its sleeve.

Secondly, Johnson doesn't have an alternative to establishment neoliberalism.

In an interview for a new book, he says, "The Treasury has made a catastrophic mistake in the last 40 years in thinking that you can just hope that the whole of the UK is somehow going to benefit from London and the southeast."

He was in effect attacking the priority both Thatcher and Blair gave to finance and the City. But there's no sign Johnson has a real strategy for a British economy pummelled by Brexit and the pandemic.

The National Insurance surcharge is highly regressive, hitting low-paid workers concentrated in the northern "red seats" the Tories won from Labour in 2019.

Tory support dropped five percentage points in the latest YouGov poll.

This is short-term stuff, but we shouldn't forget that both Thatcher and Blair were eventually driven from office.



PROTESTERS ON the march in Liverpool on Saturday (above and below)

PICTURES: NEIL TERRY

Thousands say no to arms fairs in London and Liverpool

by SAMORD

THOUSANDS OF people protested against arms fairs in Liverpool and east London last weekend.

Up to 6,000 people flooded Liverpool's streets on Saturday to demand the annual Electronic Warfare Europe convention doesn't go ahead next month.

A range of groups came together to organise the protest, including Merseyside Pensioners Association and Campaign Against the Arms Trade. They gained lots of support from bystanders and residents who waved flags from windows and sounded car horns.

Protesters held placards reading, "Stop the arms fair," and chanted, "Money for war, no money for the poor."

Protesters were joined by Labour MPs, Jeremy Corbyn and John McDonnell as they marched from Princes Park to the city centre.

Pressure

Protesters hope that enough public pressure will force the Exhibition Centre Liverpool to cancel the event set for 11-13 October.

Debs from the NEU union said, "We would seriously have to reconsider whether we hold our national conference here at the Exhibition Centre Liverpool again if they continue with the arms fair."

"As a trade union movement, every union that intends to use the centre should do the exact same thing."

"The NEU has a fantastic relationship with Palestinian teachers' unions. We support the Palestinians and it would be hypocritical for us to have a conference at this centre that facilitates the killing of our colleagues in Palestine."

The exhibition centre has already started to face booking cancellations. Last Friday, the band Massive Attack rearranged its concert in solidarity with the anti-war



protests. The following day in Newham, east London, 750 people marched against the DSEI arms fair, and against arms sales to Israel.

Protesters have been taking place all this week—with more set to happen.

On Sunday hundreds of people lined the streets throughout the march offering solidarity and support.

Palestine Solidarity Campaign activist Roua told Socialist Worker, "It's clear from what we've seen today, that local people don't want the arms fair."

Responsibility

"It's our responsibility to keep the pressure up. It was the pressure that made London Mayor, Sadiq Khan speak out against the fair."

"We must show Newham's community that it is a real threat. Those refugees are fleeing the wars that DSEI is responsible for."

Addressing the mobilisation, local Palestine activist Rob Ferguson said, "Warmongers and arms dealers in this borough fund mass slaughter that has claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of innocent people."

"It's our movement that will stop the arms fair and the drive for war."

Days of direct action

THE STOP The Arms Fair coalition organised 12 days of action against the DSEI fair in east London.

Despite a large and heavy-handed police presence, activists were determined to stop over 1,700 arms dealers from promoting lethal weapons to an expected 36,000 buyers.

Each day focuses on a different issue—with migration, borders and anti-racism the theme of action last Thursday.

Two activists abseiled from a bridge, forcing police

to close a busy dual carriageway that leads to the Excel Centre.

Several organisations back the action, including Campaign Against the Arms Trade, Palestine Solidarity Campaign and Newham Anti-Raids.

Extinction Rebellion activists blockaded the entrances to the Excel Centre on Tuesday of last week.

And on Wednesday last week an activist jumped on top of an armoured vehicle headed for display in the centre.



Got a story?

Email ideas to reports@socialistworker.co.uk

Two more years for Met's top rotten cop

The Met is full of brutality, racism and corruption—with Cressida Dick at the top, says **Simon Basketter**

DAME CRESSIDA Dick's contract to lead the Metropolitan Police is to be extended for another two years, home secretary Priti Patel, confirmed last week.

Dick received the public backing of the Police Federation and London mayor Sadiq Khan.

The extension to 2024 had been strongly opposed in some quarters. Those who have suffered as a result of the Met in recent years questioned her suitability to remain in the job.

But in a letter to The Times newspaper the former Labour home secretary Jack Straw said that the "campaign against Dame Cressida Dick's reappointment" was "as unpleasant as it is unjustified."

"She is a highly skilled, intelligent and imaginative police officer and leader, and much better than some of those now sniping from the sidelines."

Dick's fixed-term appointment as commissioner, which was due to end in April 2022 nets her £230,000 a year. She faced calls to resign in March after the Met attacked a vigil held in south London over the killing of Sarah Everard, who had been murdered by a cop.

In June, the Met was labelled "institutionally corrupt" after a probe into the unsolved murder of private detective Daniel Morgan.

Dick was accused of personally repeatedly delaying the inquiry.

She has claimed people supporting Black Lives Matter don't know which country they are in.

Target

She defended the stop and search practices that target black people.

She said, "We are targeting young people who are likely to be carrying knives and guns and drugs, we're in among the drug markets and what it means is, overall, a higher proportion of young black lads being stopped than white lads."

Dick has been referred to the tame police watchdog, the Independent Police Complaints Commission after supporting a senior officer in

FIGURE IT OUT

48 percent of all stop and searches are carried out by the Met—with black people nine times more likely to be stopped

7 bullets fired into the head of Jean Charles De Menezes by cops under Dick's command

2 more years on Dick's contract—a sign of the Tories' approval

relation to bullying. She defended Matt Horne, deputy assistant commissioner of the force in evidence to MPs earlier this year.

Horne was found guilty of three counts of misconduct while deputy chief constable of Essex Police.

Execution

Earlier in her prestigious career, Dick oversaw the operation that resulted in the brutal execution at London Underground station of Brazilian John Charles De Menezes.

His crime was to have looked—to the police—like a terrorist.

Socialist Worker can for once agree with Ken Marsh, the chair of the Metropolitan Police Federation, which represents more than 30,000 officers. He said, "She's a good cop, simple as that."

The new Police Crime and Sentencing bill that will give even more brutal and draconian powers to Dick and her thugs was going through the House of Lords for its second reading on Tuesday.

Activists must continue to build and apply pressure against state repression and police brutality.



What's your story?

Email with your ideas
reports@socialistworker.co.uk

MET POLICE break up the vigil for Sarah Everard in March this year

POVERTY

High costs force low paid parents to cut back on food to afford childcare

A SURVEY of more than 20,000 working parents has concluded that the government's childcare policies are grossly inadequate.

It found that 96 percent believed that not enough was being done to support parents with the cost and availability of childcare.

And 97 percent said that childcare was too expensive.

The survey was produced and distributed by Mumsnet, the charity Pregnant Then Screwed, the TUC union federation, the Fawcett Society and a range of other charities working to represent different parents.

One third of respondents said they paid more for childcare than their rent or mortgage.

This rose to 38 percent for those in full-time work or single parents. And it rose to 47 percent for parents from a black and ethnic minority background. Some 82 percent said costs and availability had affected mothers more.

Parliament was this week set to debate childcare after a petition called for an independent review of childcare funding and affordability. Britain has the third

most expensive childcare system in the world, with an average of nearly a third of a couple's income being spent on childcare costs.

The TUC found that between 2008 and 2016 the cost of a one year old's nursery provision grew four times faster than wages in England. In London this rose to seven times faster.

Despite the extortionate costs, one in ten childcare workers lives in poverty.

Struggling

The survey also found that those struggling most were the lowest earners, single parents, had a disability or were black.

One in three parents with a household income of less than £20,000 had to cut back on food or housing because of childcare bills.

Around 94 percent of parents had changed their working patterns after having children—with childcare costs a factor in the decision.

The lack of state provision means parents fall back on other family members. Although some 75 percent used private nurseries

for childcare, 56 percent of parents said they also relied on grandparents for help.

Joeli Brearley, the founder Pregnant Then Screwed, said, "The cost of childcare continues to increase, forcing more parents out of their jobs."

"We don't believe the government has a grasp of how big the issue is and the impact it is having on families and the economy."

Women are most affected by the burdens of childcare.

Just 16 percent of women said childcare had not affected their income at work, compared with 42 percent of men.

Around 83 percent of women said childcare costs and availability affected mothers more than fathers.

Two-thirds of women reduced their hours after having a baby, compared with 26 percent of men.

Forcing the costs and burden of raising children onto the family and women saves the system resources and money—so calls for change must continue to grow.

Isabel Ringrose



The right in Brazil plan to smash democracy

President Jair Bolsonaro's supporters are protesting to ensure he stays in power, say **Sophie Squire**

UP TO 100,000 supporters of Brazil's far right president Jair Bolsonaro took to the streets last week.

They are raising the possibility of a move to subvert democracy and block his anticipated defeat in the presidential election scheduled for October next year.

Currently every poll shows that he will lose to ex-president Lula da Silva, founder and leader of the Workers Party.

Bolsonaro has presided over a criminal failure to tackle Covid-19, leading to an official death toll of nearly 600,000.

But his supporters have vowed to make sure he stays as president by any means. And everyone knows about the military regime that took over in a US-backed coup in 1964 and ruled until 1985.

"This is a day for the Brazilian people, who will tell us which way to go," Bolsonaro said outside the presidential residence last Tuesday.

He began the day's events, presiding over a flag-raising ceremony and military show of strength. It included an air force flyover, paratroopers landing and special forces display.

Bolsonaro has particularly targeted Supreme Court justices who have been investigating the corruption organised by his family and his regime.

Electronic

And, in an echo of former US president Donald Trump, he has also denounced Brazil's electronic voting system saying it is fraudulent.

He has threatened to cancel next year's elections if the system is not amended to include printed paper ballot receipts.

At the rally in the capital of Brasilia protesters were able to break through police lines and surge towards ministry buildings and the Supreme Court.

Bolsonaro supporters say they modelled their actions on the Washington Capitol riot in US in January.

BACK STORY

Brazil's far right president Jair Bolsonaro has rallied his supporters on the streets

● They want to ensure he stays in power even if he is voted out

● Bolsonaro has been caught up in corruption and scandals, especially during the pandemic

● A recent poll found that 54 percent of Brazilians support his impeachment, with 42 percent opposing it

● And demonstrations have seen hundreds of thousands marching against Bolsonaro

One of the president's supporters at the protest said, "The military needs to remove those that aren't letting our president govern—in the Supreme Court, in the Senate, all of them. The Supreme Court doesn't protect the constitution, so our military must."

Large sections of the Brazilian ruling class presently do not wholeheartedly support Bolsonaro. They fear he might stir up too much resistance. But that is no reason for complacency.

Impeachment

The right wing protests didn't go unopposed. Thousands joined anti-Bolsonaro counter-demonstrations despite requests by some left wing leaders to avoid them.

They chanted, "Bolsonaro out," and "impeachment now".

His government has not only failed over Covid-19 and been steeped in corruption. He has also attacked LGBT+ people and indigenous rights as well as tossing aside environmental protections.

More anti-Bolsonaro protests were called last Sunday with several hundred demonstrating.

Protests in Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo and Belo Horizonte were called by conservative organisations like Movimento Brasil Livre—Free Brazil Movement. It supports the slogan "Neither Bolsonaro nor Lula".

Crowds were smaller than expected without Lula's supporters.

Big mobilisations by the left against the president are the ones with the power to push him out and beat back his core supporters.

PROTESTERS FOR Bolsonaro out outside the National Congress last Tuesday in the capital Brasilia

PALESTINE

Protests in support of escaped prisoners

ISRAEL LAUNCHED a campaign of raids, incursions, roadblocks, searches and arrests last week after a group of Palestinian prisoners liberated themselves.

Soldiers stormed Palestinian towns in the northern West Bank, which it keeps under military occupation, in search of two of the prisoners.

They have also intensified checkpoints in the West Bank, detaining and searching Palestinians, and fought with protesters demonstrating in solidarity.

CATALONIA

Call for independence on national day

UP TO 400,000 protesters flooded Catalonia's streets last Saturday in a demonstration for independence.

The protest was organised by Assemblea Nacional Catalana (ANC) in preparation for talks between the Catalan regional government and the Spanish government set for later this week.

Protesters showed their fury over the Spanish state's arrest of Catalan leaders who commissioned the 2017 independence referendum, which Spain ignored and deemed illegal.

Nine of those who have been released attended the

Six Palestinians freed themselves from the high security Gilboa prison in northern Israel last week, after apparently tunnelling for months. All six were members of Palestinian resistance groups.

Soldiers had captured four of them as Socialist Worker went to press. But they believe at least one of the two remaining self-liberated prisoners had successfully crossed over the militarised border into the West Bank.

Palestinians cheered the prisoners' liberation. They demonstrated in solidarity in towns inside Israel's "official" borders, inside the militarily occupied Jerusalem, in the West Bank, and in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Palestinians also fought back against Israeli soldiers during raids in West Bank towns and villages, including Al-Yamun, Yabad and Kafr Dan. Israeli soldiers retaliated by attacking them with sound and gas grenades.

demonstration in Barcelona that coincided with the National Day of Catalonia. ANC spokesperson Elisenda Paluzie said, "The political prisoners are back on the streets."

Spain's prime minister Pedro Sanchez from the Labour-like PSOE party continues to oppose Catalans' independence.

Activist Jordi Cuixart, who was among those jailed in 2017 said, "Those who ask us to turn the page do not want us to fight for self-determination. What is Spain's plan for Catalonia? None. Only repression."

The Catalan flag held up last Saturday

Care crisis is unjust

THE TORIES' disastrous plans for addressing the social care funding crisis will increase the burden on working class people whilst benefitting the rich.

Disabled campaigners have been fighting for a national independent living support service paid for by general taxation and free at the point of need for a long time.

Such a service should be capable of meeting all disabled people's human rights and be capable of providing good quality services.

Disabled activists within Britain's trade union's previously organised to get motions in support of these demands. They were passed by the Unite union and the Trade Union Congress in 2019.

The assembled vision document was supported by both disabled people and social care workers. It outlined that we are against integration with the NHS.

Disabled people have suffered decades of unequal access, discrimination and deaths by neglect. The pandemic showed that entrenched attitudes towards disability within medical services are inconsistent with the aim of supporting equal life opportunities for disabled people.

An understanding of disabled people's oppression—something alarmingly absent from debates on the future of social care—must be at the heart of any social care reforms.

Better pay and conditions for workers go hand in hand with this approach.

Ellen Clifford
London Disabled People
Against Cuts

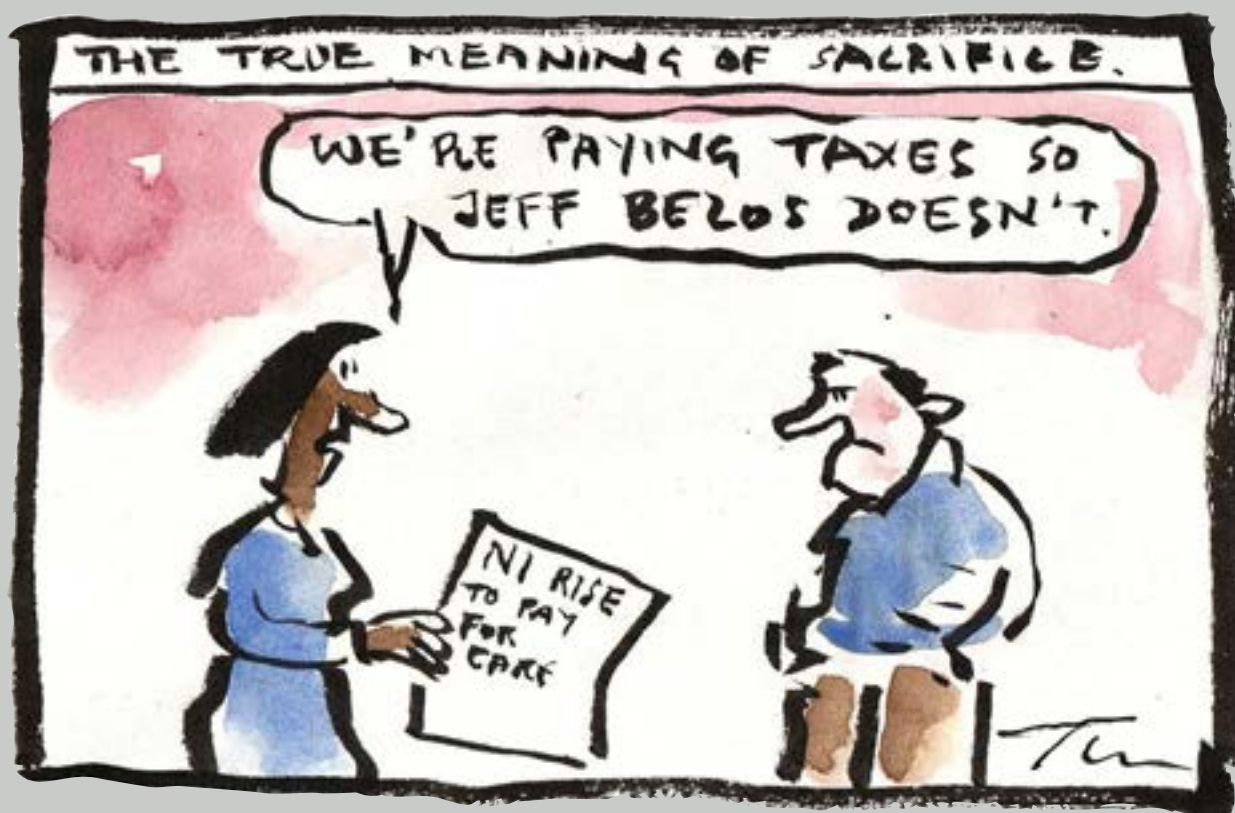


ILLUSTRATION: TIM SANDERS

Universal Credit cuts will push food banks to the edge

THE REDUCTION in Universal Credit (UC) by £20 a week will force 1.2 million people to skip meals according to a survey conducted by YouGov.

This measure shows the cruelty that Tory politicians are willing to set upon ordinary people. There is a complete disconnect and lack of care between Tories and inner city communities.

Politicians with grassroots connections such as Jeremy Corbyn and Zarah Sultana are a blessing. They've provided support and shown the world the realities that many people face.

But despite great acts of solidarity, food bank staff and volunteers have seen numbers increase.

I've volunteered in foodbanks for three years. We saw numbers attending rise dramatically as workplaces closed due to Covid-19.

Food banks are incredibly stretched and often struggle to provide the support we're determined to give. This daily challenge is set to get a lot worse.

The obstacles we face come in many forms. A recent YouGov poll showed that 23 percent of those surveyed said they haven't been able to afford personal hygiene products.

Alongside this, 21 percent of UC claimants said they may not be able to heat their homes in winter.

And 11 percent say they will no longer be able to afford the energy cost of operating an oven.

Foodbanks and mutual aid volunteers are being challenged as to how to provide accessible meals.

The Conservative Party slogan is, "Build back better."

But that doesn't mean rebuilding the communities that have suffered decades of council cuts and austerity measures.

It means lining the pockets of their super rich friends even further.

The work that foodbank volunteers do is vital.

But we must continue to pressure the Tories over austerity—and ensure food, heating and personal hygiene products are rights, not luxuries.

Emily Lloyd,
Staffordshire

Tories falsely claim to represent the workers

THE TORIES have in recent years tried to present themselves as the party of the working class.

After the "fall" of the Red Wall in 2019, they have boasted that communities that were once staunchly Labour have turned blue.

But with a National Insurance tax increase of 1.25 percentage points and the suspension of the "triple lock" pension system, their attempt to appear as friends of working people is

laughable. Johnson says the money will fund spending on health and social care.

The truth is that the Tories are trying to claw back money they lost through concessions made during the pandemic.

Some £36 billion will be stolen from workers over three years, hitting mostly the young and low-paid—and further devastating communities.

Liam Tuckwold,
Durham

CEOs determined to drill oil until 2070

THE NEW Scientist magazine was recently entirely dedicated to how we can solve climate change. They asked the oil barons when the reliance on fossil fuels would end.

"The world is going to need oil for decades to come," said Occidental Petroleum CEO Vicki Hollub. Oil and Gas company, Shell predicts an expiry date of 2070.

This is awful. These companies show that profit comes before life. They will not change and want to keep profiting from fossil

fuels despite the terrible effects on the rest of us.

We should jail all the oil company CEOs responsible for the climate disaster and seize and nationalise their assets to conduct the green energy transition that we desperately need. The revenue in 2018 of the US fossil fuel industry is around £130 billion according to Statista.

That's enough to fund a just transition to net zero.

These oil criminals should face life in jail on an island off the coast of Scotland where only the seagulls and

seals go.

Extinction Rebellion, trade unions and the environmental movement should target these criminals with these demands.

Tim Knight-Hughes,
Norwich

Just a thought...

Boris Johnson is a racist

BORIS Johnson has joined in the condemnation of the abuse directed at black England players by far right Hungarian football fans. It's hypocritical that he has done so.

Johnson has a long history of racism, including his vile comments about African people and Muslim women.

Johnson has also made a point of supporting and encouraging the Islamophobic, antisemitic and homophobic Hungarian government of Viktor Orban.

Mark Brown,
Glasgow

Politicians target poor

WHY DOES Socialist Worker seem surprised that tax increases will avoid the rich and hit the poor the hardest?

Politicians get into politics to advance their economic status and further enrich themselves.

Andres Viveros,
On Facebook

Johnson must resign

IF JAPAN'S prime minister Yoshihide Suga can resign with dignity following a spike in Covid-19 cases and deaths after the Olympics and Paralympics surely British politicians can also.

Covid-19 has been much worse here than in Japan, so jog on Boris, we dare you to resign.

Stamatina,
On Twitter

Blame Tories, not migrants

PRIVATE RENT isn't increasing because of "mass immigration", that's a racist myth that Socialist Worker is right to stand against.

There are hundreds of thousands of vacant properties.

There is little regulation for private sector renting. Almost all laws favour the landlord.

Don't blame immigration for the problems the Tory government is responsible for.

Nic Taylor,
On Facebook

WHO CARES?

LONG HOURS AND LOW PAY, SERVICES COLLAPSING AFTER YEARS OF CUTS, THOUSANDS OF UNFILLED VACANCIES, NEEDS OF THE CARED FOR IGNORED. SOCIALIST WORKER TALKS TO FRONTLINE CARE WORKERS ABOUT WHAT'S GONE WRONG

BORIS JOHNSON last week announced his plan that was supposed to fix social care. But instead of solving problems, the Tories are ploughing on with the same policies that have led to disaster.

The myriad of private care providers delivering shockingly low standards remain in place. The complex web of rules that families must navigate to get loved one the right care stays.

The almost illegal levels of pay that drive many of even the most compassionate people out of their jobs won't change.

And the millions of desperate people who don't yet receive care, and those looked after by an army of unpaid and relatives at home, will see no improvement.

That's because despite the hype, there is barely any new money going into social care. Between 2009 and 2019 central government funding to local authorities had fallen by 38 percent in real terms—and from £36.4 billion to £24.8 billion in cash terms.

The Tories' offer of an additional £5.4 billion over three years doesn't even scratch the surface of those cuts.

But forget all that.

The media's sole concern was the simple message that from 2023 no one will pay more than £86,000 for the care they need. Yet even that was a Tory sleight of hand.

That "cap" figure includes help with washing, dressing and eating, but does not include daily living costs of food, energy bills and accommodation.

People in care homes can be charged around £12,000 a year for these services



Improving care quality and workers' pay and conditions must go hand in hand



There could soon be 170,000 care vacancies

that fall outside the cap. What is more, spending on care will only count towards the £86,000 cap if your local council has assessed you as being in enough need to be eligible.

Already most people fail this test, so only the very frail qualify.

And Johnson did not even mention the growing sense of crisis in private sector care provision. But a look at coronavirus deaths in Scotland tells a story.

Out of more than 10,000 Covid deaths there, some 3,000 occurred in care homes. The top ten list of care homes with highest numbers of deaths includes nine being run by big firms.

Economies

The giant care operators, and the private equity businesses that stand behind many of them, make their money by running ever bigger care homes. But "economies of scale" means spreading staff thinly and running the risk of quickly spreading sickness among residents.

And it's not just Scotland. The Care Quality Commission last year found that one in six care providers in England were not meeting acceptable standards.

Reading through the stories of care workers opposite, it is clear that only the most radical measures can change the situation for the better.

The real way to improve social care across Britain would be to scrap the existing system and start again with a simple principle. Care will be free for all those who need it.

The endless forms, assessments,



PICTURE: ALAMY

rejections and appeals could be swept away at a stroke.

And the limits on the amount of care someone can receive must be removed too. There must also be a big improvement in care workers' pay.

Currently, most receive just above the minimum wage. Jobs advertised offering just £9.90 an hour for skilled, physically and emotionally demanding work.

Revenue

The only way to fill the more than 170,000 vacancies expected by the end of the year is to make sure the job can pay the bills and more. Of course these measures alone would cost billions of pounds. But the money is there.

According to Prem Sikka of the Tax Justice Network, around £17 billion of extra revenue could be had. It suggests abolishing the current capital gains tax system and instead taxing capital gains at the same rates as wages.

As a tax that rarely affects anyone but the rich, most working people wouldn't have to pay it. Forcing those who take home salaries of more than £4,189 a month to pay the standard 12 percent rate of National Insurance could raise another £14 billion.

These are just the sort of figures that many would expect a Labour Party opposition to use to hammer the Tories and their National Insurance rise. But only with utmost reluctance will Keir Starmer's Labour talk about the need to make the rich pay. Its failures to speak out has deepened the crisis.

"Her care has been provided by a string of constantly changing private companies. That meant not only different carers coming into her house every day, some of who she had never met before, but also them

'We need fundamental change—just as the creation of the health service was'

Jenny, care and support worker in West Yorkshire

"ONE OF the biggest problems we face in social care locally is that it is entirely privatised. As a result, it is completely separate from local authorities and from the NHS," said Jenny.

"Everyone knows that services need to be interlinked."

The second problem is that care work is held in such low esteem. Jenny says that's because the people who receive care are thought by politicians to be of little value, and that they don't contribute to society.

In addition, "care" is something that's thought of for "old people". "Those myths are damaging," she added.

"I've just visited a woman who was a nurse, and was once healthy, active and independent, but who is now disabled by Parkinson's disease.

"Her care has been provided by a string of constantly changing private companies. That meant not only different carers coming into her house every day, some of who she had never met before, but also them



Thousands have inadequate care packages

coming at different times—oblivious to her routines.

"She now has no say on when she gets out of bed, who helps her in and out of the shower. And, again and again, she has to explain to a new carer what her needs are.

"At nighttime, if she wants to stay up later than normal and watch a television programme, she can't. Whatever time her nighttime carer arrives is bedtime and that's it.

"Any sense of control over her life has been taken away by the way the

system functions."

Jenny said that pay is the other big issue in the care sector, with most wages being absurdly low.

"I've met some of the most caring and committed people at work, sometimes more so than the people I worked with when I was in the NHS," Jenny explained.

"You build real relationships with the people you care for, and if something bad happens to them, you feel it. If they've died in the night, it's your who is going to find them.

"But that commitment isn't rewarded. Workers are spoken to and treated so badly, it's shocking. And that can create resentment."

The care system doesn't just need mild reform. Jenny suggests it needs "fundamental change".

"Some people say this sort of change just isn't possible. But I think about the NHS and what a massive breakthrough that was," she added.

"Only something that big could end the private firms and low pay that are typical of care now."



£11.6 billion
The amount the Tories have cut from council spending on social care since 2009

£5.4 billion
The amount the Tories will put into social care over three years after raising National Insurance



£9.90 an hour
An average wage for a care worker

170,000
The number of social care vacancies expected by the end of the year

'This is the worse it's ever been, and it's the same everywhere'

Michelle, worker in community care in Swansea and Neath

MICHELLE HELPS her mostly elderly clients with their medication, personal care, cleaning and shopping.

On average she does 25 home visits a day, starting work at 6.45am and finishing work as late as 10pm.

"I love my job," she said. "I love helping people, especially those who've got nobody. For them, our visits are the only company they get."

"But our house calls have been reduced to 10 or 15 minute slots. And we're always under pressure to squeeze in more."

The way care workers are treated makes Michelle really angry.

"It's the unpaid driving between calls I really resent," she said. "We're only paid for the time we spend at someone's house."

"After my morning shift, my afternoon one runs from about 3.30pm to 9.30pm—that's six hours—but I'm only paid for three hours and 20 minutes work."

"I work two really long days, plus a half day—but I only get paid for 24 hours work."

Michelle says that the job has been getting progressively harder and that staff shortages are now

"horrendous". The combination of low pay and long hours mean very few people want to work in social care.

"This is the worst it's ever been," she said. "And it's not just the company I work for, it's the same everywhere. Lots of care firms are going under at the moment, and I can't see that changing."

On Boris Johnson's claim to have "fixed" the social care system Michelle says simply, "I will believe when I see it."

Care workers need to fight back

'I worry about my clients long after my shift is over'

Kirsty works in Glasgow with people who have mental health difficulties

"EVERYTHING THAT might enrich someone's life has been cut," said Kirsty, whose job involves seeing people in their houses, and helping them cope with mental distress.

Staffing has become such a problem that services run at only the bare minimum.

"I help people with things like their personal care and housework and so on," Kirsty explained.

"But also I spend time talking them out of their houses, talking to them and trying to help deal with problems."

Kirsty's hours are long and sometimes she doesn't finish until 11pm. Even when she's finished work, the job is still on her mind.

"I worry about my clients when my shift is over, and I'm always checking my phone for messages. And that's especially true if someone has had to go to hospital, for example," she added.

"It's really hard to switch off."

Kirsty says that work was particularly hard during the early phase of the pandemic.

During that first month she said she felt like a "Covid time bomb".

"Our job is to keep people safe, out of hospital and integrated into society," Kirsty said.

"But I was constantly worried that by taking the bus to see them, I'd spread the virus to my clients."

"And, with everything closed, many of them were stuck in high rise flats all over Glasgow. For some the only contact they had was with a carer who had to rush their job and leave."

Minimum

Kirsty said she and other staff often work beyond their hours, without pay, to make sure the people they look after have the bare minimum.

"Lots of us do things like shopping for clients in our own time," she said. "The trouble is, if you log that time spent, the client gets charged for it and many cannot afford it."

Kirsty is scathing about Boris Johnson's plans for social care. "I think it's terrible that he wants us care workers to pay for social care—that it's coming out of our wages," Kirsty added.

"We need a pay rise, but instead he's given us a pay cut."

WHAT WE STAND FOR

These are the core politics of the Socialist Workers Party.

INDEPENDENT WORKING CLASS ACTION

Under capitalism workers' labour creates all profit. A socialist society can only be constructed when the working class seizes control of the means of production and democratically plans how they are used.

REVOLUTION NOT REFORM

The present system cannot be patched up or reformed as the established Labour and trade union leaders say.

It has to be overthrown. Capitalism systematically degrades the natural world. Ending environmental crisis means creating a new society.

THERE IS NO PARLIAMENTARY ROAD

The structures of the present parliament, army, police and judiciary cannot be taken over and used by the working class. They grew up under capitalism and are designed to protect the ruling class against the workers.

The working class needs an entirely different kind of state—a workers' state based upon councils of workers' delegates and a workers' militia.

At most parliamentary activity can be used to make propaganda against the present system.

Only the mass action of the workers themselves can destroy the system.

INTERNATIONALISM

The struggle for socialism is part of a worldwide struggle. We campaign for solidarity with workers in other countries.

We oppose everything which turns workers from one country against those from other countries. We oppose racism and imperialism. We oppose all immigration controls.

We support the right of black people and other oppressed groups to organise their own defence. We support all genuine national liberation movements. The experience of Russia demonstrates that a socialist revolution cannot survive in isolation in one country.

In Russia the result was state capitalism, not socialism. In Eastern Europe and China a similar system was later established by Stalinist parties. We support the struggle of workers in these countries against both private and state capitalism.

We are for real social, economic and political equality of women.

We are for an end to all forms of discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people.

We oppose discrimination against disabled people including those who experience mental distress.

We defend the right of believers to practise their religion without state interference.

THE REVOLUTIONARY PARTY

To achieve socialism the most militant sections of the working class have to be organised into a revolutionary socialist party.

Such a party can only be built by activity in the mass organisations of the working class.

We have to prove in practice to other workers that reformist leaders and reformist ideas are opposed to their own interests.

We have to build a rank and file movement within the unions.

To join us, turn to page 16 or go to www.swp.org.uk or phone 020 7840 5602

Socialist Workers Party online meetings



20 years after 9/11 War, resistance and the failures of imperialism

KENT
Thu 23 Sep,
8.15pm
434-623-8064

LEEDS
Thu 23 Sep,
7pm
881-4770-0676

LONDON: HACKNEY
Thu 23 Sep,
7.30pm
854-8245-8715

BIRMINGHAM

Let's talk about sex — Marxism and sexual liberation

Wed 22 Sep,
7pm
281-634-5938

BLACK COUNTRY, SHROPSHIRE & STAFFORDSHIRE

Big Pharma, Tories and Covid — will vaccines solve the crisis?

Wed 22 Sep,
7.30pm
914-9548-1031

BRADFORD

Extreme weather and the climate — is this the new normal?

Thu 23 Sep,
7pm
885-9187-7552

CAMBRIDGE

Populism to fascism — how can we defeat the far right?

Thu 23 Sep,
7.30pm
681-800-4408

CARDIFF

Is human nature a barrier to socialism?

Wed 22 Sep,
7.30pm
630-181-4857

CHESTERFIELD

People, parliament and power — is this democracy?

Thu 23 Sep,
7pm
828-532-8731

COVENTRY

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After trauma, can building a house help rebuild your life?

The film *Herself* tries to balance between a tale of abuse and an uplifting story of overcoming the odds. Most of the time it does it well, writes **Sarah Bates**

HERSELF ISN'T quite the sentimental guff promised by the trailer.

Co-written and starring Clare Dunne, Sandra is desperately trying to rebuild her life after fleeing domestic violence at the hands of her ex-husband Gary.

She survives one final brutal attack, but what does the aftermath look like? Sandra is living in a hotel, working two jobs and driving her kids half way across Dublin to get them to school.

This seems hard enough, but *Herself* takes time to show the grim drudgery of it all.

She can't enter the hotel's main entrance and use the lift, but instead has to scuttle in through the back doors and walk up the stairs.

That applies even if she's hauling in her food shopping, even if she's carrying a sleeping child.

Strangely little is revealed about Sandra throughout the film, so we only see the bundle of stress she's become.

Hotel

Sandra is facing the prospect of staying at the hotel for years and seizes on the idea of starting a self-build project.

This is where *Herself* is generally thoughtful and engaging but at times sails a little close to easy sentimentality for comfort.

The montages of foundations being laid and planks of wood sawn are a bit much. But other parts are quite sweet.

Sandra says it's the first time in many years she's been allowed to have friends at all.



SANDRA QUICKLY recruits a team of helpers

She wants help constructing a house, and a group of willing volunteers seemingly appear out of nowhere and pitch in to help.

She needs a bit of land, and she's immediately gifted a piece of prime real estate.

While the solutions to Sandra's situation stretch belief, the real life context is all too believable.

The film manages to steer clear of collapsing into sentimentality by drawing us back to the reality of the aftermath of her horror.

So we see her two young children complete visits to their menacing father. Some courtroom scenes, where Sandra takes on a system that attempts to blame her, are the most compelling.

I can see what the film is getting at. But it's a little trite to say that Sandra "finds herself" through the experience of building this house.

Herself has to achieve a difficult balancing act between a miserable tale of abuse and a cheerful uplifting story about overcoming the odds. Most of the time, it does this well.

Obviously, *Herself* offers no real solutions to the many layers in which Sandra is left damaged by the social security system and traumatised by the individuals within her life.

But then again, it's not meant to. And despite all the promises of a neat ending, there's no easy conclusion for Sandra, Gary, or the girls. The threat of the long term impacts of abuse continue to linger on despite all her best efforts.

Herself, directed by Phyllida Lloyd, is in cinemas now and on Amazon Prime video

Inside the life of one of the 11 September hijackers

FILM

COPILLOT

In cinemas. For showings go to bit.ly/copilot0921

COPILLOT, DIRECTED by Anna Zohra Berrached, is a complicated film about the imagined wife of one of the 11 September plane hijackers.

It begins as a love story following the two main characters as they fall for each other and then marry in secret.

Because the event that this film is centred on really happened, the audience might be led

to believe the story or characters are based on the truth.

The character of Saeed, played by Roger Azar, is based on real-life 9/11 hijacker Ziad Jarrah. Jarrah's girlfriend, Aysel Sengun, becomes Asli, played by Canan Kir.

But much of this film's story is completely fictionalised.

The dramatisation of real people helps the audience to understand them better.

The film does not shy away from looking at why people are drawn to extraordinary acts.



Asli and Saeed

Saeed, who like Jarrah was from Lebanon, is bitterly angry about endless war and western imperialism in the Middle East.

And the film constantly reminds you of the continuing destruction in the region.

When Asli travels to Lebanon she is confronted with the sight of tanks and soldiers.

But, at times, the way in which these characters were written can get in the way of how much you actually believe what's going on.

It doesn't seem

believable that Asli would be so blinded by love for Saeed that she wouldn't ask questions—especially after he disappears for months on end.

One of the closing scenes of the film is a conversation between Asli and her family after they hear the news about 9/11.

Asli's mother comments that her sister Ebru has already had her headscarf ripped off in an Islamophobic attack.

The film ends on a reminder that after 9/11 everything changed, especially for Muslims.

Sophie Squire

RADIO

A LONG WAY FROM VIETNAM

Available at bit.ly/Vietnam0921 for two weeks

IN *A Long Way From Vietnam*, BBC journalist Nga Pham looks at why Vietnamese migration is the second highest in Britain.

Some 39 Vietnamese people suffocated in a lorry found in Essex in 2019 trying to make it over the Channel. Yet people from the poorest areas of Vietnam still make the journey, and in their own words they explain why.

After suffering for so long in poverty, many would rather risk their lives than face a bleak and hopeless future.

Some are willing to pay smuggling networks. Others are victims tricked into making the journey, exploited along the way and forced into slavery when they arrive.

Many end up with huge debts to smugglers that can't ever be paid off, or spend years trying. Journeys across the Channel alone can cost £20,000.

Poorest

The podcast also talks to families of the 39 migrants who died in the lorry.

They are from the poorest provinces reliant on rice farming and fishing that has been jeopardised by natural disasters and polluted seas.

Even family members of those dead would themselves risk the journey to escape poverty and crippling debts in Vietnam.

One man arrived in 2019 with his wife, after travelling across China, Russia, Poland and France for a year.

He sent for his 15 year old son to join him—but he tragically died in the lorry disaster.

Once found by authorities in Britain, working in nail bars or trafficked to work at cannabis farms, migrants are deported or imprisoned—even the victims of modern slavery.

Pham talks to immigration minister Chris Philp. He claims that the government is improving the situation through its new Nationality and Borders bill.

But Andrew Wallace from refugee charity Unseen slams the bill—calling for looser borders as a way to stop trafficking and smuggling.

"The reason people take risks is because there are no safe routes for asylum seekers and refugee applications," he explained. **Isabel Ringrose**

IN THE United States, a battle is currently raging—and women's bodies are the battlegrounds. American women are in the midst of one of the most significant assaults on their reproductive rights.

In Texas last week a law went through that effectively bans abortion after six weeks—before many women are even aware that they're pregnant.

Next month Mississippi's attempt to ban abortion before 15 weeks will reach the federal Supreme Court with a Republican majority.

The 1973 case that provides abortion access, *Roe v Wade*, could be rolled back.

The landmark judicial ruling found that a Texas statute forbidding abortion except when necessary to save the mother's life was unconstitutional.

In the time before Texas introduced its bill, 30 states prohibited abortion without exception and 16 banned abortions except in certain circumstances.

More recently, Alabama in 2019 attempted to ban abortions outright. And other states such as Missouri, Louisiana, Georgia, Kentucky, and Ohio put "heartbeat bills" in place. But these remain blocked at the judicial level.

The future of these cases and women's legal access to abortions will be considered in the coming months by the Supreme Court.

Right wing bigots have fought and chipped at *Roe v Wade* since the bill's introduction, but they are divided.

Some of them demand that reproductive rights are ripped up.

But they face a problem—many people in the US believe that abortion should be legal.

So other right wingers think a better strategy is to gradually undermine existing abortion rights by removing care available, such as shutting down clinics.

Right wing politicians use a "culture war" strategy around issues like abortion, trans rights and racism. They want to cut across class and corral working class people behind their agenda.

DONALD Trump expanded a "gag rule" that stripped federal funds from international organisations offering abortion services and attacked the Planned Parenthood non-profit health group.

And after his first year in office, when his approval rating was the lowest on record, Trump spoke at an anti-abortion rally to rile up his loyal base.

It's easy to think that the US right has always attacked abortion rights to gain votes.

PRO-CHOICE protest in the US in 1973

WHY THE US RIGHT ATTACK ABORTION

Abortion rights have been hard fought for in the US. Now some of these rights are under ferocious assault. Isabel Ringrose explores a history of resistance and shows why the right's view on abortion is complicated

Richard Nixon

But abortion only became a partisan issue during the backlash against the gains of Civil Rights Movement and other forms of resistance during the 1960s.

Before the 1970s, many Republicans supported the legalisation of abortion. For them, giving women choices suited their belief in individual rights and limited state intervention.

They preferred abortion rights



Abortion rights have never been granted simply by progressive politicians

to public money being used to support poor women and their children.

The 1972 election saw the first significant shift in how the two main parties viewed abortion.

Republican president Richard Nixon stood for election again and looked to win over a new group of right wing Catholics and social conservatives. He also wanted to win over seats in the South that Democrats had

traditionally held. To do this, he ran on a platform opposed to abortion. His plan worked.

Nixon won 36 percent of the Democratic vote—twice more than the percentage of voters who typically defect from their party in presidential elections.

He also became the first Republican presidential candidate to win the majority of Catholic voters.

Three years after the Supreme Court had ruled on *Roe v Wade*, the Republican party backed an anti-abortion constitutional amendment.

This was again an attempt to win Catholic voters, for both the presidential and Congressional elections.

Four years after *Roe v Wade*, the Hyde Amendment to ban federal funding for most abortions was voted on.

As the Republicans marched on with their anti-abortion attacks, the Democratic Party affirmed its support for legal abortions. But only because of mounting pressure from below.

The party began to take up more issues around women's reproductive rights, such as access to contraception and health care.

But for Catholic Democrats like former president Bill Clinton and president Joe Biden, the lines on abortion have not been as clear.

Clinton's 1992 campaign ran the slogan "Safe, legal and rare" to describe his abortion policy—a position supported by Hillary Clinton in her 2008 election campaign.

However because of the waves of pro-choice and anti-Trump sentiment that Hilary Clinton knew might propel her to the White House she supported the repeal of Hyde to win support.

Abortion rights have never simply been granted by politicians. A movement has always had to force them to act.

The abortion movement took off in the 1960s after Gerri Santoro from Connecticut died trying to obtain an illegal abortion.

At this time the anti-Vietnam war movement, Civil Rights movement and Stonewall riots had created a mood for change.

Pro-choice movements of the 1960s and 70s won changes to the law and political backing for the abortion movement.

Even right wing governments since then knew they had to give in to avoid risking further uprisings.

The rights currently being rolled back by reactionaries were won through years of fighting on the streets and workplaces, showing it's possible to wrestle back control of women's bodies.

Women developed their own organisations to provide abortions to women who could not obtain them elsewhere.

Pro-Choice America was formed in 1969 to oppose restrictions on abortion and

expand access, and in 1973 became the National Abortion Rights Action League.

The movement staged political events like “abortion speak-outs”, which featured women giving first-hand accounts of illegal abortions.

Other feminist groups such as the National Organisation for Women fought within the system to help move 17 states to legalise abortion under certain conditions before *Roe v Wade*.

Both mainstream parties have used abortion to gain more votes.

The Democrats present themselves as the progressive alternative on the back of the movement from below.

But the neoliberal politics of the Democrats are part of the reason why the system pushes women into poverty with an inability to access abortion and reproductive care. The party swallowed radical movements to make them more palatable and give them a bigger voting pool.

For the right, abortion will always be a polarising issue that switches between the bosses’ needs and gaining popular support from sections of society.

THE RULING class is torn between needing women to take care of the next generation of workers and their labour in the workforce.

The bosses can favour abortion access because they would lose large sections of the workforce to childcare duties.

Some firms in the US, such as Facebook and Google, even pay for egg freezing so workers can get pregnant later in their careers and work for longer.

But this doesn’t mean that the bosses aren’t invested in the nuclear family. They still support it as it lets them off the hook for providing for the next generation of workers.

And the right also fall behind this idea. Conservatives see the traditional family as an institution that maintains stability and provides control.

Yet there is widespread popular support in the US for abortion rights.

A Gallup opinion poll in May this year showed 32 percent of people thought abortion should be legal under any circumstances.

This is the highest figure for over 25 years. And then a further 48 percent said it should be legal under some circumstances. Only 19 percent were opposed to abortion in all circumstances.

An anti abortion protester (top) Defending Roe vs Wade protest in 1992 (above)

But shoring up the nuclear family today, even though it doesn’t fit with how many people live, is still vital for our rulers. The family still plays an essential economic and ideological role.

One study, likely to be an underestimate, found women’s unpaid labour was worth more than £2.16 trillion annually to capitalism globally before the pandemic.

And one way the right shore up these “family values” is by stamping out abortion rights.

Despite the contradictions, the ruling classes don’t want women to control their lives and bodies fully. And they’re certainly not pro-life in any real sense.

They don’t care about working class women who die from dangerous abortions or migrant children trying to reach a better life but who die trying.

Capitalism will always try to find a way to roll back any gains made to suit its needs.

While capitalism’s economic and political needs shape our ideas about abortion, ideas have also been shaped by ordinary people’s struggles.

The only way to win true liberation for women, with free access to abortion for good, is to fight back against a system built on exploitation and oppression.



COMMENT

The rise of private equity reveals reality of capitalism

Private equity firms have collected huge profits in recent years, **Simon Basketter** explores the rise in buyouts and deals

PLUNDERING IS enjoying an unprecedented boom. The global value of deals carried out by private equity firms is set to reach \$1 trillion (£723 billion) for the first time this year.

And private equity firms have an estimated £2.5 trillion waiting to be deployed in takeovers.

The buyout barbarians are targeting Britain, where public companies, those listed on the stock market are trading on low valuations.

Private equity firms have struck more deals in Britain in the first half of the year than in the same period in any other year.

The number of buyouts is up 60 percent in 2021 compared with the same period in 2019.

Announced

Private equity firms have announced approaches to 13 listed British companies since the start of 2021.

European head of private equity at Blackstone says, Britain’s “pro-business environment” is why, “there is no shortage of opportunity”.

Private equity works like this. You and I decide we want to start a firm.

We raise money from clients and put it into a fund in a tax haven.

We find a few companies we want to buy, using a bit of our own money (equity) but funding as much as possible with debt, or “leverage”.

We then sell or float the companies on the stock market at a profit after cutting costs or selling assets. We return the cash to our investors.

Before doing that, though, we take our cut—known as “carried interest”—20 percent of the profits above a certain amount.

Because we’ve invested some of our own money in the fund, we get to take this as a capital gain rather than

income. That means it’s taxed at 28 percent, not 45 percent.

Between 2006 and 2015, private equity bosses pocketed at least £165 billion of carried interest.

There were three private equity multi-billionaires in 2005. There were 22 by last year.

Charges associated with the private equity buyout, such as fees for completing the deal and annual management fees, are put onto the acquired company’s accounts, not the private equity fund.

Typically a £10 billion deal produces an immediate fee of £50 million (a 0.5 percent fee) for completing the sale and £30 million a year in management fees.

This is on top of the enormous fees the accountants and lawyers who oversee the deal make out of the process.

Shareholders of supermarket chain Morrisons vote on a private equity offer next month.

Morrisons’ freehold



Private equity bosses pocketed at least £165 billion



land and buildings are worth about £5.8 billion.

That is more than the market value of the company as a whole.

So even without selling stores, new owners could boost their returns by borrowing against their value.

One 2019 study found that when firms buy listed companies, 13 percent of jobs are cut over two years and the wages of those remaining go down.

If a buyout goes well, private equity bosses receive huge returns.

If the company goes bust, the private equity company sells off the assets to pay debts.

Dirty

Private equity does capitalism’s dirty business in the dark. But it’s not much better in the light.

A public company, quoted on the stock exchange, is a tiny bit accountable to shareholders though not to the rest of us.

So Debenhams was plundered by private equity in the early 2000s but when it sacked all its staff and shut all its shops it was a stock market company.

For bosses, taking money off the back of workers is the most important thing.

Private equity is not the “unacceptable face of capitalism”, rather it shows the reality of how this system works.

READ MORE

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by Judith Orr
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● **Sexism and the System: A Rebel’s Guide to Women’s Liberation**

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● **Ireland’s abortion victory: women’s lives, the liberal agenda and the radical left**

by Marnie Holborow
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Solidarity with the revolutionaries in Syria

by CHARLIE KIMBER

SOCIALISTS IN Syria are warning that the regime of the ruler Bashar al-Assad is trying to crush the last centres of revolutionary resistance.

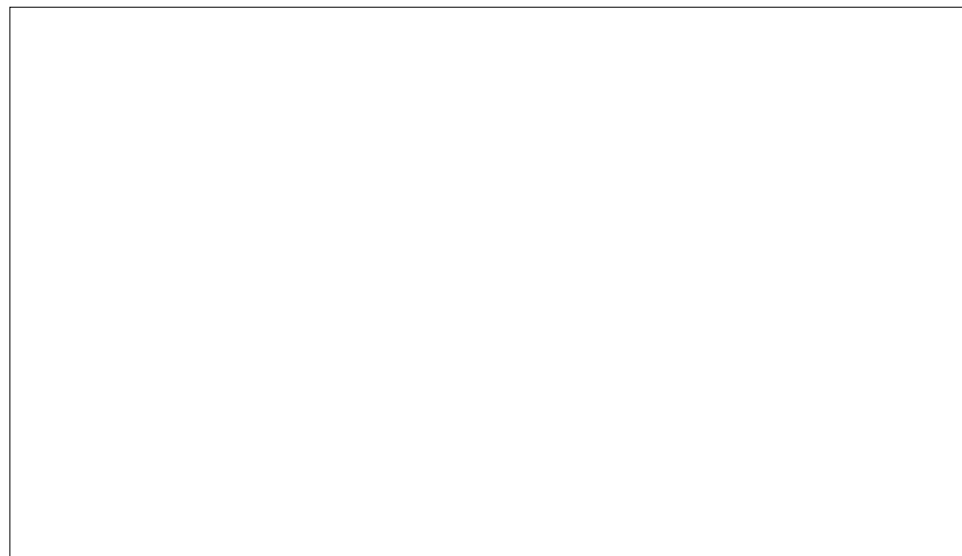
The statement from the Revolutionary Left Current in Syria statement says, “The criminal regime is working to turn Daraa, the cradle of the revolution, into a cemetery.”

In March 2011 secret police arrested a group of 15 school students who had spray painted “The people want to bring down the regime” on a wall. This was the slogan of the Egyptian and Tunisian revolutions which Syrians had seen on their television screens.

Al-Assad and his forces were terrified they too would also be toppled.

The students were tortured and had their fingernails pulled out. The shock and anger at such barbarity helped trigger a nationwide uprising.

Ten years after the revolution began, the government has ruthlessly destroyed almost all the committees that were thrown up by



SYRIAN REGIME'S troops entered the opposition-held Daraa city for 'talks'

ordinary people to take over the running of their areas.

But, says the statement, “Despite the decline of the popular movement and its defeat in general, parts of the regions of Daraa and Houran have remained resistant to the forces of the regime and its allies and also to other counter-revolutionary forces.”

This is a reference to how people have had to combat

the regime and its allies. In particular the Russian and Iranian forces, but also in some places Isis and al-Qaeda.

The statement goes, “The spirit of popular resistance and the goals of the popular revolution remained alive and enduring.

“But the regime of the junta, built on the idea of humiliating and crushing the

people, couldn't tolerate the survival of this resistance.

“It believes that by crushing it, this will crush the last hope of the Syrian people for their liberation, and thus complete its victory over the rebellious masses.”

The regime took over Daraa Governorate province militarily in 2018, but in some areas its hold is contested.

The latest challenge to the regime was people who refused to take part in the fake presidential elections in May this year.

Some 50,000 people in the area of Daraa al-Balad have faced a ferocious bombardment. And the defeat of the resistance is not just about ending the hope of overthrowing al-Assad.

The statement says, “The end of popular resistance in Daraa is an economic need for the regime, Jordan and other countries. It is a need for the Zionist state [Israel], which prefers the regime to control its southern regions rather than control by a popular movement hostile to it.

“The regime has been for decades the best guard for the security of the Zionist state.”

At one point there were negotiations between the regime and the local committees in Daraa. But, “for months, the junta's regime has been violating all the agreements it made with the resistance masses in Daraa, under Russian tutelage.

“These days it is tightening the noose around our

people. It demands they either surrender completely or leave to the areas of the Turkish occupation and the terrorist Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham in Idlib.

“The forces of the left and freedom in our country and the world must stand in solidarity with our people in Daraa, who are defending their land, freedom and dignity.”

There is now talk of a deal between the regime and some of the Daraa committees. It would allow the government to disarm people and search homes as it pleases.

But the socialists' statement ends uncompromisingly.

“Greetings to our comrades in the steadfast revolutionary left movement in Daraa. A salute to the masses of our heroic resistance

“No to the displacement of our people from Daraa. No to turning Daraa into a concentration camp. Freedom for the popular masses in Daraa and every part of our country. Long live international solidarity!”

For more on the Revolutionary Left Current in Syria go to linktr.ee/revoleftsyria

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Build protests and strikes for upcoming Cop26 talks

Cop26 will take place in November to discuss the climate crisis. Sophie Squire speaks to activists who say big and militant mobilisations are the way forward

THE UNITED Nations Climate Change Conference, better known as Cop26, is fast approaching.

The conference will see world leaders join with politicians, NGOs and businesses in Glasgow to discuss the climate crisis.

But like previous talks, Cop26 will likely fall flat. Efforts are underway to build mobilisations to bring the rage over governments' climate inaction to the conference.

Organisers hope a protest on Saturday 6 November in Glasgow will bring 50,000 or more people onto the streets. And on the same day there will be demonstrations across Britain.

Organisers hope the London one will be the same size or bigger than the one in Glasgow.

Activists in the Cop26 coalition have been organising in more than 40 city hubs. The coalition includes trade unions, NGOs and climate groups.

Claire is a nurse and part of the Glasgow hub.

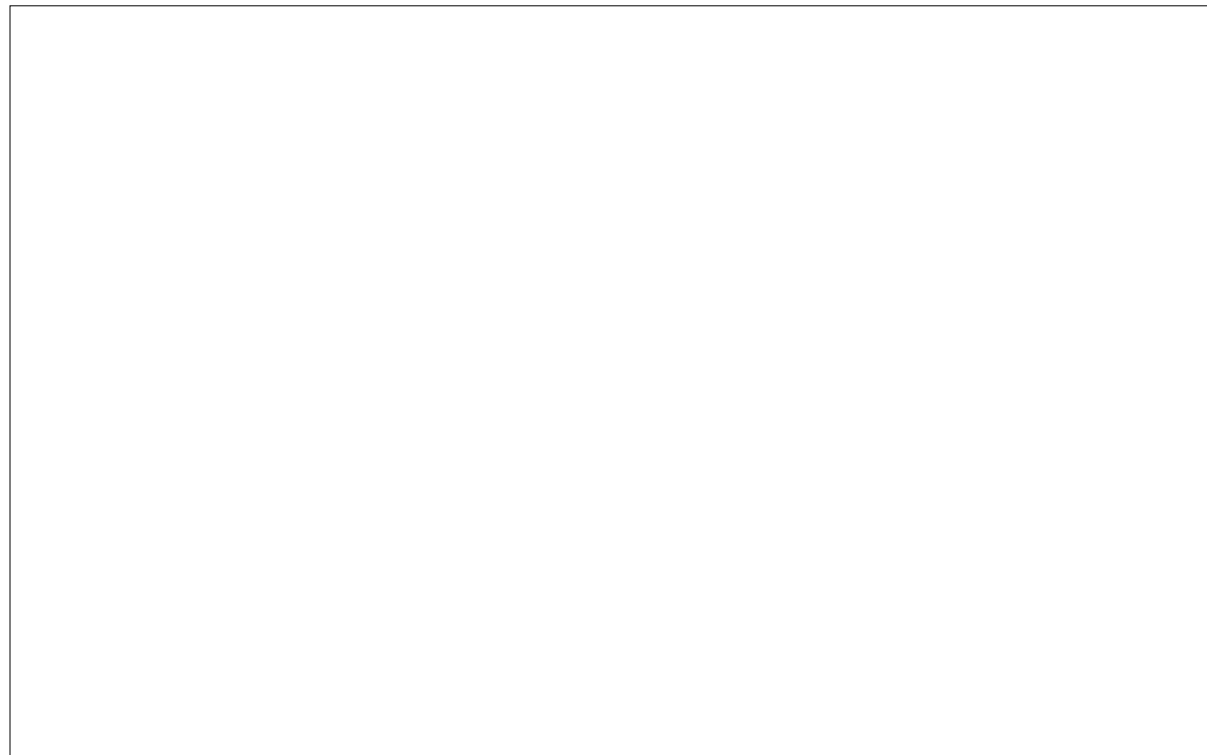
She told Socialist Worker that at Cop26, "They'll say a lot, they'll make promises, but they'll do nothing. The conference itself excludes most people, but the protests are an opportunity for people to get their voices heard."

Easier

Salena Williams, from Bristol's hub said, campaigning on local environmental issues has made it easier to open discussions about broader issues. "Engaging people on the issues that matter to them has worked to get wider layers of people involved."

"People are scared by what they see on the news but don't feel like they can do anything."

"Big protests can raise



BORIS JOHNSON advertising the delayed Cop26 climate change conference

people's confidence and say if we work collectively, we can make a difference."

Judy Paskell, a Manchester hub coordinator involved with Campaign Against Climate Change said, "The global climate strike on 24 September is a critical date."

"After not striking for a while, school strikers need the support of the wider movement."

Judy also stressed workers must join the mobilisations.

The Scottish government is already worried that ScotRail workers in the

RMT union, will strike during Cop26.

We need more militant action to show that trite words from the SNP or Joe Biden won't fool us.

The Cop26 coalition has called a day of workplace action on 5 November.

Trade unionists must organise for this date. The best action would be strikes and stoppages. But everyone can do something. Claire stressed the importance of showing solidarity with the Global South. "When we're out campaigning we get people to

think about the Clyde river flooding—whole communities would be washed away."

"There are so many areas across the world where this has already happened."

And many of those who had suffered can't get to the Cop26 protests.

"Cop26 is an opportunity for us to say we are with them," Claire added.

Socialists must build big and disruptive protests to rage against do-nothing politicians.

Cop26 expense for a 'facade'

THE cost of the Cop26 conference of inaction will be astronomical, with the bill likely to be over £100 million.

More police on the streets, heightened security and accommodation for over 30,000 delegates to the conference will add to the expense.

Clare said the excesses of the conference are all a "facade".

Cleaned

"The pandemic meant many services in Glasgow were cut, parks weren't cleaned, and library services shut," she said.

"Services haven't returned. It's clear the Scottish government and Glasgow council want to show the city as its best, for world leaders, but not for us."

Instead of reinstating these services and employing more workers to clean the streets, the City Council has opted to rely on volunteers to pick up litter.

Community groups have been encouraged to join a scheme, headed up by fast food restaurant McDonald's, to pick up the rubbish.

Protesters face heavy police presence

TENS of thousands of police will be deployed daily in Glasgow to protect the conference.

This operation will include thousands of cops that have been specially trained to suppress protests.

Police Scotland said they would take a "human rights" approach to the handling of crowds—but only if they don't get too effective.

Scotland's Deputy Chief Constable Will Kerr said that protesters who get too rowdy would face the "fullest range of tactics available."

Another top cop last week threatened increased action against anything that might "impinge upon the ability of the conference to operate".

World leaders will prioritise profits over the planet

ARGUMENTS are happening at every level of society on how to avert climate breakdown.

Inside the Cop26 conference, those at the top of society will debate stopping global warming while keeping the system intact and their wealthy friends happy.

World leaders such as US president Joe Biden are likely to push new technology as the solution to the climate crisis.

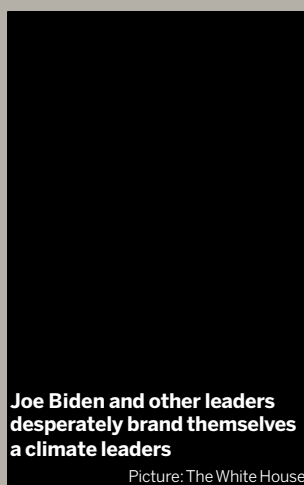
And some protesting outside the conference might be convinced

by this. But socialists say that while new technology itself is not bad, it is useless in the hands of the bosses.

We already know what it would take to cut emissions—fossil fuels must stay in the ground and be replaced with renewables.

Those in power know this, but they hold up new technology as the only solution because it maintains the system.

The key argument is what must we do to avoid the climate crisis.



Joe Biden and other leaders desperately brand themselves as climate leaders

Picture: The White House

Those, including some of the NGOs who are part of the Cop26 Coalition, will say we should appeal to those in power to change.

But world leaders and policymakers are unlikely to take steps to reform the system.

The conference will host many leaders such as prime minister Boris Johnson, who brand themselves climate champions yet support fossil fuel projects.

These ventures are incompatible with plans

to stop temperatures rising 1.5 degrees.

They continue to back the fossil fuel industry because those in power remain locked into a profit system.

While demands for reforms such as the Green New Deal should be made, ultimately socialists must fight for more.

Avoiding disaster will take a complete break from capitalism and fossil fuels.

Cop26 protests allow opportunities to make this argument.

‘We won’t give in to the bullies,’ say school strikers

Workers in an East London school are standing up against victimisation, reports Sam Ord

AS PUPILS returned to classrooms in England and Wales, teachers at Oaks Park High School in Redbridge, east London returned to picket lines instead.

Workers there opposed bullying management and the sacking of a union rep who challenged the school’s safety measures at the height of the pandemic.

They struck in June and July and last week continued their fight by staff walking out from 7-9 September. They were set to return to picket lines for three days from Tuesday this week.

Current and former staff at Oaks Park say bullying runs deep within the school. This has pushed some staff to “counselling for stress and severe anxiety”.

Others complain of a “toxic atmosphere” and “feeling physically sick on the way to work”.

Around 100 school workers and local trade unionists protested outside Redbridge town hall last Saturday to demand the council stop supporting the school’s bullying management.

They held union banners and signs reading, “Bully-free zone,” and “Stop union busting.”

As the new wave of strikes began, agency staff were hired to cover for the striking teachers and support staff. The NEU claims this is unlawful.

Disappointing

Redbridge NEU secretary, Venda Premkumar, said, “It is disappointing that Redbridge, a Labour council, has heard harrowing accounts of the bullying taking place at Oaks Park High and is allowing it to continue.

“We should have resolved the dispute last academic year to end the disruption to children and families’ lives.

“Education workers do not want to work in a borough where the council gives the green light to bullies,” she said.

BACK STORY

● In June school workers and NEU union members at Oaks Park High School used section 44 of the Employment Rights Act to protect their safety.

● They were fighting over lack of safety during the pandemic

● One rep said lack of safety measures had led his pregnant partner to catch the virus

Redbridge council also saw protests at the end of last term for refusing to back victimised staff.

NEU members say the council can expect more strikes and protests if it refuses to condemn strike breaking.

Environment

Bill Stockwell, assistant secretary of Redbridge NEU, said, “We cannot be confident the toxic environment in the school will change until our rep who was sacked on grossly overstated charges is reinstated.”

Redbridge NEU members have received support from parents and the wider trade union movement.

Meanwhile in Willenhall, West Midlands, Barcroft Primary School started term late as 28 teachers and support staff refused to work.

The fantastic unofficial strike action was in response to the reinstatement of two senior school leaders who were suspended over allegations of bullying.

The schools remained closed for two days and returned on the third, only offering classes for four year groups.

Some parents complain that the bullying has affected the quality of teaching provided with many staff regularly accepting other jobs.

Oaks Park NEU strike 14-16 September. Picket lines outside the school from 7am to 9am. Parents’ Zoom meeting on Weds 15 September at 7pm with details about why staff are on strike. Webinar ID: 934 3879 5913

OAKS PARK school strikers were joined by many others at a protest at Redbridge town hall last Saturday

Rents soar outside London as greedy landlords seek to cash in on pandemic

PRIVATE RENTS outside London are rising at their fastest rate for 13 years.

According to property website Zoopla, rents rose by 5 percent over the 12 months to the end of July—the biggest increase since its index began in 2008.

The company said the “The demand for rental property, coupled with lower levels of supply, will continue to put upward pressure on rents.” It added that the market would be affected by the course of the pandemic.

Average rents in Britain, excluding London, are running currently at £790 a month, up from £752 a year earlier.

This adds more than £450 to an average annual rent bill as renters return to big cities after an exit during the pandemic. Some rents have even jumped by at least 25 percent.

Rents in Wigan, Greater Manchester, and Mansfield, Nottinghamshire, have risen by upwards of 10 percent in a year.

Cities including Edinburgh have seen a growth in demand and have hiked up the rent.

Meanwhile in Hastings, East Sussex, and Norwich rents are up by more than 9 percent.

However, rents are still slightly down in London from their



astronomic highs after some people moved further out to the suburbs or the countryside during the pandemic.

Rental declines in London have now “bottomed out”—average rents were down only by 3.8 percent in July, compared with 9.8 percent in February.

Competition

According to Zoopla, competition to find a place to rent is fierce, with many rents being agreed within just 15 days.

Housing should be a right rather than a constant worry as people fight rising costs and remain at the mercy of the market.

In August, the amount of property available was around a third below where it usually is in summer.

Although more people are renting, a lack of housing isn’t a problem for those who can afford

to buy large properties—or pay the top rents.

House prices have risen, so some landlords have sold up to cash in as much money as they can.

And properties are being rented by would-be homebuyers who are “renting tactically” to move quickly when the house they want comes on the market.

One solution to the crisis would be to use the unused or empty houses across the country. And despite there being a low supply of housing, new developments are being built all the time to be sold for profits.

In Scotland, the government has announced it will “implement an effective national system of rent controls, enhance tenants’ rights”. That would be welcome.

But the details are not fully clear. And landlords often respond to rent controls by withdrawing their properties from the market or refusing upgrades and repairs.

The key issue is the mass building of council homes that can give people genuinely affordable rents and security of tenure.

Instead a system remains where private developers seek to squeeze out as much money from a piece of land as possible.

TRANSPORT WORKERS

Unite all the fights to win at ScotRail

by SAM ORD

SCOTRAIL WORKERS in the RMT union are continue their strikes despite attacks from bosses and the Scottish National Party (SNP).

Train conductors and ticket examiners returned to picket lines on Sunday after conductors overwhelmingly voted for six days of further action.

Workers are fighting for the same overtime that pay train drivers receive.

Ticket examiners are also being re-balloted.

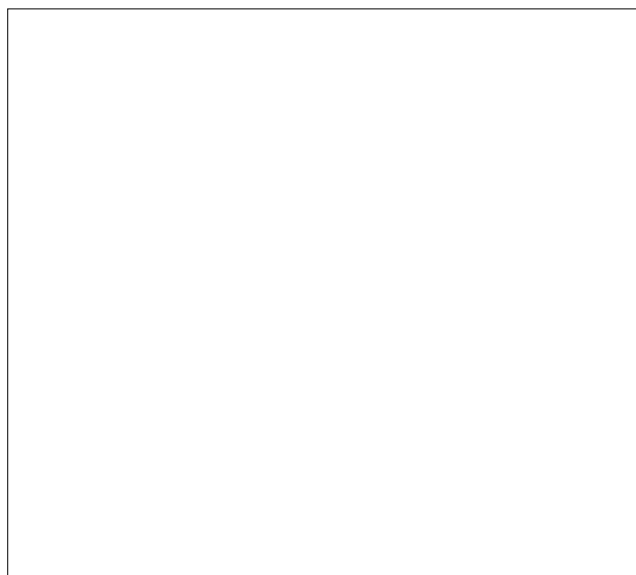
The dispute involves hundreds of workers and has been running since March.

The RMT says ScotRail endangers people by replacing strikers with managers who lack safety training.

Team managers in the TSSA union acted in solidarity with the RMT and voted to strike after being used as strike-breakers.

Cleaners and gateline workers employed by ScotRail also continue actions short of strike, including an overtime ban. Despite the union negotiating with bosses for a pay rise, no offer has been made.

As a result the union is



WORKERS ON South Western Railway are battling service cuts

balloting to strike during the Cop26 conference in November.

Five SNP MPs shamefully attacked the strikes over this.

Elsewhere on ScotRail 250 engineers in the Unite union have voted 78 percent in favour of a strike over pay and job losses.

The unions should unite all these battles to beat ScotRail—and the Scottish government.

■WORKERS IN the RMT union at East Midlands Railway continue to strike over safety concerns.

Disputes have been running for four months with workers claiming one onboard manager and senior conductor isn't enough to safely operate 12 carriage trains.

Strikes are planned every Sunday until 26 September.

■BUS DRIVERS for operating

company, Stagecoach in East Midlands depots, Mansfield and Worksop plan to take action short of a strike from Friday.

The workers in the RMT union are calling for a pay rise to meet professional pay rates. Other depots in Yorkshire, Wessex and the South West are also balloting over the same issue.

■HUNDREDS OF bus workers employed by Ribble Motor Services Ltd, in the north west of England are being balloted to strike.

The Unite union members are preparing to more pay and improved sick pay. The ballot is set to close on 20 September.

■THE 57 Unite union members on the Woolwich ferry in east London are continuing to strike three times a week throughout September having held over 40 days of action since May.

Workers oppose the victimisation of two Unite union reps whilst also standing against the overuse of agency staff.

They are also calling on Transport for London bosses to begin pay negotiations.

SCOTTISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Vote for councils pay fight

COUNCIL workers in Scotland are in the final week of a ballot for strikes over pay.

The Unison union is balloting its members who work in waste and recycling services, school cleaning, catering, and janitorial services.

It comes after members rejected a pay offer from bosses' organisation Cosla that included a flat rise of £800 for those earning

less than £25,000—some 55 percent of local government workers.

In response, bosses changed their offer to £850—just 97p more per week.

The ballot was set to end on Wednesday of next week.

Workers have to campaign for big Yes vote for strikes—then demand that leaders call action immediately, and ensure those sections on strike aren't isolated.

COINSTRUCTION

Stop Skanska victimisation

KEVIN MACKEN, an electrician and Unite union rep, took construction giant Skanska to an employment tribunal last week.

He says he was sacked after he made complaints about safety on Skanska's projects, including HS2 and Crossrail.

Kevin said before giving evidence to the tribunal, "I was the longest surviving safety rep on Crossrail."

The catalogue of evidence I've acquired is extensive and very damaging.

"I was targeted by Skanska for unfair redundancy due to my health and safety work."

Skanska has previously admitted that it checked over 66,000 workers against a construction industry blacklist in four years.

In one year it spent over £28,000 checking workers.

SCOTTISH INDEPENDENCE

DRIVERS

Make the most of the shortage of lorry drivers

LORRY DRIVERS and engineers employed by Hanson on the Castle Cement contract have voted for strikes over pay.

The 200 lorry drivers in the Unite union have rejected a pay offer of 2.5 percent.

It amounts to a pay cut in real terms with the RPI inflation rates currently at 3.9 percent.

Drivers deliver dry cement to construction projects including Hinkley Point, HS2, Sellafield and Thames Tideway. And they deliver to building product companies Jewson and Marshalls.

With the much publicised lorry drivers' shortage, the battle should be for at least a double figures pay rise.

■AROUND 40 drivers working at Booker

Retail Partners at its Thamesmead site in south east London have voted unanimously for strikes.

Action could hit more than 1,500 convenience stores.

But national Unite union leaders haven't called strikes yet.

Instead the union is allowing time for "crunch talks" with bosses.

Unite has warned that any strikes will deepen the supply shortages because of a lack of HGV drivers.

It should act sooner rather than later to use the crisis to workers' advantage.

The company put in place temporary £5 an hour pay uplift for its drivers at the Hemel Hempstead depot because of the shortage.

But it refused to do so at the Thamesmead site.

FOOD WORKERS

End division at Weetabix

MEMBERS OF the Usdaw union working at Weetabix have settled their pay dispute, as 82 percent of members voted to accept a new offer on pay.

Weetabix has reinstated the 27.5 percent shift pay premium for them.

Meanwhile, Unite union members will begin a series of 48-hour strikes on Tuesday next week.

This will be followed by strikes on the same day every week until the end of November.

The workers at factories in Kettering and Corby in Northamptonshire are facing changes to their shifts and working patterns that could leave them £5,000 a year worse off.

Workers from across the factories should come together to put pressure on bosses to win their demands together rather than being divided on union lines.

ROUND-UP

Stop cash out & cash in

GMB UNION members working for G4S cash services are voting in a strike ballot after the company made a zero percent pay offer.

If the 1,400 workers walk out they would hit cash machines and other financial services.

G4S, now owned by Allied Universal, would face strikes at a time of severe labour shortages across the industry.

Time to cash in.

■SOME 150 factory workers are being balloted for strikes at Alpha UK's Golborne factory over a 2 percent pay offer.

The Unite union members also warn the company to fulfil its pledge made in 2020 to increase employer pension contributions.

Alpha UK makes plastic bottles and containers for major brands including PZ Cussons, Johnson & Johnson, Lever, Britvic, Coca Cola, Arla Foods and others.

Marching in Stirling

PICTURE: RICHARD PROW/AUOB

Back on the streets for Scottish independence

OVER 1,000 people joined a march for Scottish independence last Saturday in Stirling.

It was organised by the All Under One Banner (AUOB) campaign group.

It won wide public support from the streets as it snaked its way through the city from the Auld Brig for the three miles to the Bannockburn battlefield site.

It was the first AUOB march since Covid-19 restrictions were eased.

It marked a step up in the campaign to call for a second referendum now.

Although this march was smaller than the pre-covid ones on this issue, it was significantly larger than any of the static rallies held recently.

At the rally, Socialist Worker supporter Charlotte Ahmed, spoke strongly of the need to use mass civil disobedience to achieve campaign aims.

Referencing plans to restrict protests at the Scottish parliament's site she said, "If they don't want us at Holyrood, we will be at Holyrood."

"If they don't want us at Cop26, we will be at Cop26."

"All Yes groups and independence activists should aim to be part of the Cop26 demo on 6 November with banners, flags and chants."

"Change won't happen without mass protest."

The independence campaign moves next to the capital, Edinburgh, in another march organised by AUOB on Saturday, 25 September.

It will be a major test to see if the independence campaign can return to the streets in large numbers.

Gary Blyth

●For details of the Edinburgh march go to bit.ly/AUOBinEdinburgh

TUC CONFERENCE— WE NEED A FIGHTBACK

by SOPHIE SQUIRE

THE TUC union federation congress this week heard plenty of denunciations of the government, but very little sign of a serious fightback.

In her opening address on Sunday to the online conference, TUC General Secretary Frances O'Grady said, "Covid must be a catalyst for real change."

She called for Universal Credit cuts to be cancelled and for better pay and conditions for workers.

But her claim that during the pandemic "unions have shown the value we bring" is not based on reality.

Instead, many union leaders spent their time talking about a supposed "national interest" and prioritising a return to work.

The new Unite general secretary Sharon Graham moved a motion on combating fire and rehire. This is when bosses sack and re-employ workers on worse contracts.

Graham described fire and rehire as, "One of the scandals of our age."

She said she'd been elected "on an industrial



THE NURSES United group protested over NHS pay in Sajid Javid's constituency last week

PICTURE: BOB MALONEY

mandate to refocus my union on jobs, pay and conditions".

She added, "Our priority must be to co-ordinate a fightback at the workplace."

"No politician is coming to save us," and there should be "no more political tail wagging the industrial dog".

The promise to see more militant unions focused on



We need a real battle to beat fire and rehire

struggle over parliamentary manoeuvres is welcome.

But it takes real battles to defeat fire and rehire, such as the forthcoming strikes at Weetabix—and no more compromises dressed up as victories.

Graham is wrong to talk about good and bad bosses—all bosses are involved in a

competition to survive and grow. They all put workers' interests behind profit.

Discussion of the climate crisis saw a retreat from the positive motion passed two years ago that called for cooperation with school climate strikers.

This year there was no call to join the protests in

November at Cop26 and even worse the motion passed backed nuclear power and praised the virtues of gas production.

Kevin Buchanan from the GMB union called for a "clear commitment from the politicians to save the nuclear industry".

UCU union president Vicky Blake rightly argued nuclear power can never be safe.

The motion did call for a "just transition". But it was saturated with phrases implying climate action is a threat to workers and there must be a fight "to protect British goods and jobs".

But without urgent change, climate chaos will mean global disaster and poorer people will be hit hardest.

And genuine climate action would create huge numbers of jobs rather than removing them.

The motion passed with the GMB, Unite, Aslef, NEU, FDA and Community voting in favour.

The unions that opposed it included CWU, UCU, Unison, RMT and TSSA.

Unions should be fighting for climate action, not shoring up a killer system.

Keir Starmer's speech woos union leaders but offers too little to workers

by NICK CLARK

LABOUR LEADER Keir Starmer promised very little for workers and rank and file trade unionists when he spoke to the TUC union congress on Tuesday.

There was no talk of a pay rise for NHS and public sector workers to make up for more than a decade of cuts and freezes, for instance.

His headline promise of a £10 an hour minimum wage will be far too little by 2024 when a Labour government might be elected.

Even the Tories are on course to raise the minimum wage by then.

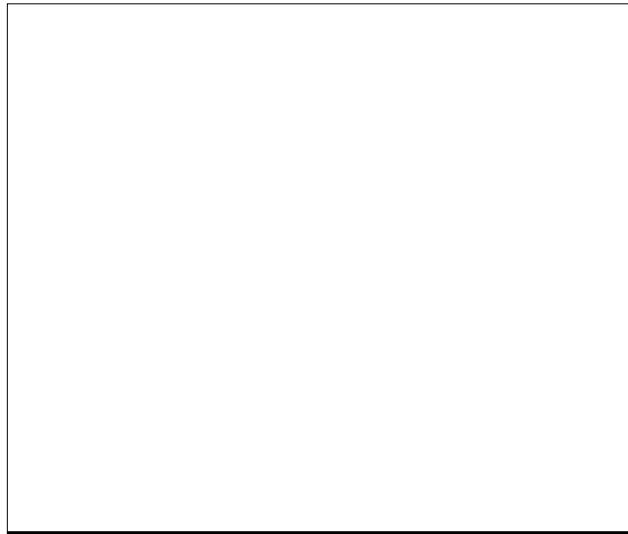
But Starmer's message wasn't for workers, or even rank and file trade unionists.

He was speaking over their heads—to the union leaders and full time bureaucrats.

For all of Starmer's attempts to woo big business, he still needs the union leaders. Trade unions are by far the Labour Party's biggest funders.

But the union leaders expect something in return.

They want the Labour



Labour leader Keir Starmer in south London, 2019

Party to promise just enough reforms so they don't feel the pressure to organise strikes on behalf of their members.

And they want a say in how the party is run.

That's why Len McCluskey, the former leader of Unite—Labour's biggest donor—is angry with Starmer.

Attack

He used an article in the Guardian newspaper to attack Starmer just hours before the Labour leader's TUC speech

McCluskey says Starmer betrayed a deal to restore former left wing leader

Jeremy Corbyn as a Labour MP. But McCluskey chose not to fight back against Starmer.

Instead chose to preserve the "unity" of the left and right in Labour by arranging a compromise.

Corbyn would backtrack, and Starmer would let him back in.

McCluskey is furious because Starmer didn't do as he was told.

Now some union leaders such as the bakers' Bfawu union's president Ian Hodson, fear Starmer wants to marginalise

>>Continued on page 5